

LEARNING FROM EDUCATOR EXPERIENCES IN A HAWAIIAN SCHOOL:
PEAK PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND A'O

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Oli Mahalo
`Uhola `ia ka makaloa lā
Pū `ai i ke aloha ā
Kū ka'i `ia ka hā loa lā
Pāwehi mai nā lehua
Mai ka ho'oku'i a ka hālāwai lā
Mahalo e Nā Akua
Mahalo e nā kūpuna lā, `eā
Mahalo me ke aloha lā
Mahalo me ke aloha lā
~Kehau Camara

Abstract

Due to rapid advancements in the world and shifting priorities at the school level, educators must keep abreast of current developments and how to continue to engage and challenge students in creative ways. This study examined the experiences 21 Kamehameha Schools educators indicated best support their professional learning to gain further insights and awareness that leads to enhanced professional practice in schools. A phenomenological research design was employed for structuring focus groups comprised of educators from three Kamehameha Schools K-12 campuses located on the islands of O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i. Maximum variation sampling was the strategy to select participants. Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001) assisted in the design of interview questions. Participants identified multiple pathways to achieve professional learning that led to impacts on their practice, and in some cases, student outcomes. Themes that emerged as important features of peak experiences were structured programs, outcomes and aspirations multiple pathways and choice, collaborative efforts, and professional learning supports. Further research is suggested to better understand variables and complexities associated with educator learning and a'o (Hawaiian education) principles that might be applied in Hawaiian schools, such as Kamehameha.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of Study	3
Professional Wayfinding	4
Advanced Degree	5
Professional Organizations	6
Interdisciplinary Teaming.....	8
Curriculum Coordinator	10
Educational Context	12
Research Questions	13
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	14
Introduction.....	14
Student Learning Outcomes	15
Professional Educator	18
Professional Development and Professional Learning	19
Six Characteristics of Highly Effective Professional Learning.....	22
Focus on specific content/subject matter.....	23
Sufficient contact time and duration	23
Collective and collaborative participation.....	24
Active learning methods	25
Coherence to educator knowledge and beliefs.....	25
Sustainability	26
A'o Aku, A'o Mai	27

Summary	29
CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	32
Overview	32
Purpose.....	32
Methodology	33
Context	34
Preparation	35
Research Design.....	37
Participants	41
Data Collection.....	43
Data Analysis	46
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS	48
Overview	48
Participants	49
Professional Development to Professional Learning	51
Results of Research Question One: Educator PL Experiences.....	54
Structured Program	55
Personal Interest	59
External Driver	61
Future Possibilities	63
Other Experiences	66
Summary of Research Question One Results	67
Results of Research Question Two: Highly Effective Professional Learning Practices.....	68
Specific Content/Subject Matter.....	69
Coherence to Educator Knowledge and Beliefs	70
Active Learning	72
Sustainability	73

Collegial/Collective Partnerships	74
Sufficient Contact Time/Duration	75
Summary of Research Question Two Results	76
Results of Research Question Three: A'o Aku, A'o Mai	76
Summary of Research Question Three Findings.....	78
Summary	79
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION.....	80
Valued Professional Learning Experiences	82
Structured programs, outcomes and aspirations	82
Multiple pathways and choice	83
Collaborative efforts.....	84
Professional learning supports	85
Other themes.....	85
Summary	87
Limitations	88
Implications for Practice	90
Recommendations for Future Study	91
Topics for further inquiry	91
Research design	92
Conclusion	93
Appendices	
A - Characteristics of Effective Professional Development/Professional Learning.....	95
B - Memo to Kamehameha Leaders Seeking Permission to Recruit Campus Educators	96
C - Recruitment Flyer	98
D - Consent to Participate in Focus Group	99
E - Participant Handout	102

F - Discussion Guide for Focus Group Sessions	103
G - Sample of Initial Coding by In Vivo	105
H - Sample of Second Level Coding	107
I - Comparison of Participant's Peak Professional Learning to Highly Effective Professional Learning Practices	110
J – Participant's Peak Professional Learning Link to A'o	111
References	112

List of Tables

Table 1. Results of Select SPN Survey Responses by Kamehameha Educators and Educators Nationally	36
Table 2. Research Question Link to Focus Group Questions	39
Table 3. Research Question Link to Participants PL and Highly Effective PL	40
Table 4. Distribution of Participants based on Gender, Degree Earned and School Level Assignment	50
Table 5. Distribution by Content Area Focus of Participants	50
Table 6. Peak Professional Learning Cited by Study Participants	56
Table 7. Highly Effective Professional Learning Practices Identified by Study Participants.	69

List of Figures

Figure 1. Diagram of Appreciative Inquiry Process Steps	38
Figure 2. Distribution of Participants' Years in Education at Kamehameha and Overall Total	51
Figure 3. Kenneth's Vision of the Future	64
Figure 4. Natalie's Vision of the Future	65
Figure 5. Stanton's Vision of the Future	65
Figure 6. Barb's Vision of the Future	65

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

E lawe i ke a'o mālama a e 'oi mau ka na'auao.

He who takes his teachings and applies them increases his knowledge.

`Ōlelo No'eau 328 (Pukui, 1983, p. 40)

`Ōlelo no'eau or Hawaiian proverbs were collected by Mary Kawena Pukui, a noted Hawaiian scholar, who had the foresight to document traditional Hawaiian knowledge and language so that these pearls would be preserved for current and future generations. The wisdom of these proverbs seem simple at first glance yet one can learn much with their simplicity. The literal translation of E lawe I ke a'o mālama a e 'oi mau ka na'auao provided a fitting introduction to educators' professional learning. Deliberate application of the proverbs to their school context allows educators to grow both meaningfully and relevantly in their areas of expertise, while positively impacting students and colleagues.

The Hawaiian term for education is a'o. Hawaiian language scholars, Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert (1986) further defined a'o as "Instruction, teaching, doctrine, learning, instruction book, manual, advice, counsel; to learn, teach, advise, instruct, train, tutor, coach, prescribe, and admonish" (p.27). The definition helps to identify the multiple facets of education from a Hawaiian perspective.

Through the examination of historical accounts of Native Hawaiian behaviors, thoughts, and values, Malcolm Nāea Chun (2011) describes the cultural significance and perception of a'o is teaching and learning are reciprocal actions. A'o aku can be translated to mean *to teach* and a'o mai *to learn*. An individual who achieved mastery in a particular field inherently assumed kuleana (responsibility) to continually practice and perpetuate this specialized knowledge and skills through mentorships. Here lies the notion of giving and receiving that is foundational to the basic constructs of building mutual relationships and supports within traditional Hawaiian society.

The traditional Hawaiian view of education serves as a launching point for my examination of the professional development experiences of educators at the Kamehameha Schools, an independent school system that serves students of Hawaiian ancestry. A private charitable educational trust founded by Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop. During the princess' lifetime (1831-1884), she experienced firsthand the rapid decline of the Native Hawaiian population. The avenue for strengthening the survival of her Hawaiian people was grounded in Princess Pauahi's genuine value and appreciation for education. The Kamehameha Schools' institutional mission is "to create educational opportunities into perpetuity that improve the capability and well-being of Hawaiians" (Kamehameha Schools, 1996). A recently adopted schools' vision statement for three Kamehameha campuses located on O'ahu, Hawai'i Island and Maui specified that as a Hawaiian school "all leaders, staff and students are committed to educational excellence through strong teaching and meaningful learning that supports the renewed vibrancy of Hawai'i's indigenous people and their life-long success in the 21st century world" ("Kula Hawai'i on the KS Campuses," 2013).

Vision as defined by Geise (2015) is the desired or future state of an institution articulated in its underlying objectives as it pertains to key areas (e.g., curriculum, instruction, assessment, and environment). Given the Kula Hawai'i vision statement and stated assumptions, Kamehameha Schools' educators have an articulated description of what it means to be a Hawaiian school. How this vision is further interpreted and acted upon will impact current and future students. As professional educators entrusted with leading K-12 students formative progress towards the attainment of post-secondary success, imperative is that educators keep abreast of current developments to enhance their professional practice that ultimately leads to improved student outcomes.

Purpose of Study

Given the rapid pace of today's world, educators charged with the stewardship of student learning must equip themselves to assist young people in acquiring the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for leading successful 21st century lives. To better understand how educators may keep well-informed about developments in the field of education, this study examined professional learning experiences Kamehameha educators perceived as being valuable for professional practice enhancement. A primary research question is: "What are the experiences that Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning?"

In reflecting upon their professional development activities, Kamehameha Schools educators were asked to describe professional learning experiences in which the knowledge and/or skill gained permanently changed the way they thought and/or behaved related to their practice (Katz & Dack, 2013, p. 15). The objectives of the study were to 1) examine educators' perceptions and reflections of professional learning that have impacted their professional practice; 2) compare their experiences with what has been cited in research as highly effective elements of professional learning, and 3) identify professional learning characteristics that support a'o, a traditional Hawaiian view of education.

Guskey (2009) stated that "Schools can be no better than the educators who work within them, and professional development remains key to educators' progress and professional growth" (p. 226). Furthermore, based on the examination of education literature, Guskey concluded that if school improvement initiatives are to succeed, well designed and executed professional development activities that enhance educators' knowledge and skill are a key component. Kamehameha policy maintains the investment in their organization's education workforce by supporting various professional development opportunities that are intended to align with the schools' mission, operations and employee professional growth goals. The intent is for Kamehameha and its staff members to share responsibility for continuous learning and growth in the spirit of 'imi naau'ao, to seek

knowledge, and po'okela, a culture of excellence. As I reflected upon my own teaching career and professional learning journey, I recalled how I was influenced by a variety of different factors that served to sustain my pursuit of continuous professional learning.

Professional Wayfinding

My interest in professional learning began thirty years ago when I graduated from college eager to begin my teaching career. According to California teaching certification requirements, I had five years to obtain 30 additional university credits beyond my bachelor's degree in order to receive a full teaching credential. I returned to Hawai'i and enrolled at the local university. However, when a long-term substitute position in a combination fifth-sixth grade class at Kamehameha elementary became available, I deferred further coursework. The configuration of the fifth-sixth grade classroom pods included four classrooms clustered around a shared common area. Within close proximity, I had access to a network of experienced educators in the adjoining classrooms. They welcomed me into their classrooms, offered guidance, and eventually requested me as a substitute once my long-term assignment was completed. These same teachers endorsed my application with the principal when a full-time teaching position became available the following year.

As a novice, full-time teacher, the school offered few formal professional development opportunities other than biannual staff in-service days or informal mentorship by grade-level colleagues. During these in-services, hired external consultants conducted in-school workshops. One year, the focus was on whole language instruction; the next year, the focus shifted to learning styles; and the following year, multiple intelligences was the primary emphasis. Each new presenter would engage educators in various instructional strategies to apply new knowledge during the workshops. However, once teachers returned to their classrooms, they implemented the concepts and strategies on their own. This led to pockets of teachers who were fully vested in whole language, those who gravitated towards learning styles, others were devoted to multiple intelligence, and still others, who choose not to adopt any "new" approach.

After my first few years in teaching, I began to search for specific workshops and seminars geared for educators and their work schedules sponsored by the local university. These courses offered college credits to which Kamehameha provided partial tuition reimbursement. The credits also accrued towards salary advancement based on 15 credit step increments or attainment of advanced degrees. I dedicated numerous weekends, spring and summer vacations to participate in professional development experiences with a network of educators from both private and public school sectors. I selected offerings that aligned with my particular learning needs and areas of interest (e.g., Hawai'i Writing Project, Field Trip Sites of O'ahu).

Beyond earning certification credits and salary/career advancement, additional benefits came with the local university affiliation. First, having completed my undergraduate degree in another state, I was able to broaden my awareness of relevant local educational resources by connecting with individuals and organizations previously unknown to me. Secondly, I expanded the breadth and depth of my own subject matter knowledge through the opportunities to learn from subject matter experts. Finally, while often the lone person from my school attending various courses and workshops, I partnered with educators from other schools who possessed similar interests. This provided an opportunity to expand my network of colleagues to share ideas on how we planned to implement our new learning with students.

Advanced Degree

After six years of gaining valuable teaching experience by learning from more experienced colleagues, various workshops, and trial and error lessons with students, I applied for a master's program with the hope of continuing my formal education. During my seventh year of teaching, I received a one-year sabbatical leave to begin a master's program in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in Pacific Island Studies. As a first-generation college graduate, seeking an advanced degree was new territory. Being in a master's program a decade after earning a bachelor's degree was an intellectual challenge

that broadened my content area knowledge and increased my awareness of the recent advancements in the educational field. Also, the sabbatical proved beneficial and allowed me to devote full attention to my studies; I did not feel conflicted about devoting less attention to my students.

In addition to the invigorating mental stimulation of being back in the classroom as a learner, professors highly endorsed membership in professional organizations and subscriptions to educational journals related to our respective fields. Through their example, university instructors committed to heighten our awareness of best practices in education.

Professional Organizations

For a number of years, I involved myself with two local educational organizations: the Consortium for Teaching Asia and Pacific in the Schools (CTAPS) and Hawai'i Geographic Alliance (HGA). Both groups shared commonalities, such as the following:

- Missions to increase American's knowledge in areas the U.S. public are widely known to lack basic information and understanding (i.e., the Asian-Pacific region and geography).
- Primary strategies to build capacity at schools and districts by deepening selected educators' knowledge, including learning instructional strategies in targeted areas so members could serve as resources for their colleagues.
- Leadership teams comprised of master educators who possessed a strong pedagogical foundation, as well as a firm grasp of adult learning theory.
- Affiliations with well-known organizations considered as leaders in their respective fields (i.e., CTAPS associated with the East-West Center located on the University of Hawai'i @ Mānoa campus and the National Geographic Society partially sponsored HGA).

CTAPS hosted two-week summer institutes and two follow-up sessions during the fall and spring semesters that focused on a particular region (e.g., Southeast Asia). They

coordinated speakers and activities were coordinated to develop awareness and deepen knowledge of the Pacific-Asian region. After the subject matter expert's presentation (e.g., Piracy in the SE Asian waters), school-based teams of 3-6 teachers participated in content-related demonstration lessons geared to a particular grade level (e.g., middle school). The lesson debriefing process included teacher collaboration that brainstormed ways to modify the lesson to fit their respective grade level. The East-West Center housed a repository of teacher-created lessons for participating teachers' perusal and use with their own students, as well as sharing with other teachers.

Additionally, teachers involved in CTAPS had the opportunity to further their knowledge of the Pacific and Asian region by applying for subsidized summer travel study programs. Participants were selected through a competitive application process and required to attend mandatory Saturday sessions during the preceding spring semester in order to prepare for the summer experience. I earned a spot in the Tahiti summer study along with a group of fifteen educators who taught at public, private and Hawaiian immersion schools. A majority of the participants had strong Hawaiian culture backgrounds and sought to broaden their knowledge of the Pacific. Upon return, the program expected participants to create a lesson plan or unit of study relating some facet of the travel study experience to our curriculum. Finally, CTAPS added those plans to their lesson plans library.

In the mid-1980s, when the United States received wide-spread negative publicity on the poor performance of average Americans when queried about basic geography facts, the National Geographic Society (NGS) committed to support and improve geographic literacy. NGS spearheaded the creation of a network of alliances across each of the 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico, with each alliance built on a collaborative partnership between state university faculty and K-12 schools. Besides providing high quality geography resources and partial funding of local summer institutes for educators to expand and deepen knowledge of geographic themes and concepts, NGS sponsored two educators from each state alliance to spend two weeks at their Washington D.C. headquarters. Once there, they

prepared to spearhead the national Geography Awareness Week (GAW) campaign. Based on our application and involvement with the local affiliate, Hawai'i Geographic Alliance, a high school teacher from Kaua'i and I were selected to represent Hawai'i. Our primary responsibility as state alliance representatives was to coordinate and facilitate the annual state GAW activities. NGS organized presentations by national experts in the field related to the selected GAW theme (e.g., water), provided numerous resources (e.g., lesson plans, maps, videos) and training sessions (e.g., how to create press releases and high-powered presentations). Successful GAW coordinators from the prior year conducted demonstration lessons to prepare current representatives to replicate at schools and workshops.

National Geographic Society's goal aimed to was improve the geographic literacy of students in the United States. A key strategy to achieve this goal included investing in teacher leaders. For example, NGS funded all travel, meals, and hotel accommodations; equipped each state alliance representative with high quality NGS products and resources (e.g., posters, lesson plans, videos, books); and awarded a monetary stipend to each state's representative in recognition of the anticipated time and effort to spearhead their state's GAW campaign.

Interdisciplinary Teaming

After ten years as a grade 5 and grade 6 classroom teacher, I transferred to middle school as a social studies teacher. Our grade 7 interdisciplinary team consisted of a teacher specializing in one of four disciplines: math, science, social studies and English. As a team, we kept abreast of current middle-level education through regular attendance to local conferences and study of professional middle school journals and books. The middle school administration budgeted for two teachers to attend the annual national middle school conference. Three of four team members attended on different occasions. After hearing other educators reiterate their experiences with interdisciplinary projects, our team decided to embark on our own journey. These interdisciplinary team projects were collaborative

ventures in which we aligned our content areas to create project-based learning experiences for students.

Our first attempt was to collectively enhance a research project previously conducted in my social studies class. In the prior year, each student “adopted” a native Hawaiian plant and researched its biology, geographic locations, cultural significance, and legends or proverbs associated with it. Students assembled their findings into a brag book which included their hand-drawn illustrations and bibliography. From my perspective, the quality of the students’ work rose exponentially in the following years as the science, English and math teachers contributed their subject matter expertise to further deepen and enhance the students’ inquiry.

As our interdisciplinary team projects became more sophisticated and began to blur the lines between respective content areas, improvements in students’ learning continued. Our team’s confidence and readiness to share our teaching experiences with other educators grew. We presented at the state middle school conference annually as a way to give back to the profession and acknowledge those who provided guidance and inspiration that motivated our team to create engaging learning experiences for students.

Embarking on a new instructional strategy designed to assist students with making connections across multiple content areas came with a challenge: finding interested and collegial colleagues willing to help students make connections across multiple content areas. Our teacher team kept students at the forefront as we learned to collaborate effectively with one another. Working closely with colleagues to create interdisciplinary units of study initially took longer than if I were to work alone on my curriculum. However, the depth of knowledge and skills gained by students made the investment worthwhile. A common project rubric explained to students key learning outcomes and the assessment procedure, including examination from multiple viewpoints, such as their own, fellow classmates, and family members. During the project launch, our teacher team created innovative ways to stimulate student interest. From my perspective as a member of a diverse team of

educators, we brought different strengths that contributed to a culture for excellence in learning. We held students and ourselves to a high level of standards and expectations. As a result, student engagement was high.

During the six years that I was a member of this interdisciplinary teacher team, the composition of members morphed for various reasons. No two school years seemed to be exactly alike, and our team adjusted according to the needs of students, as well as strengths of the teaching staff. The excitement of a new school year presented the opportunity to meet students at their learning level, and challenge them to reach higher levels.

Curriculum Coordinator

After serving as a classroom teacher for sixteen years, I transitioned to a new role as middle school curriculum coordinator. One of my main responsibilities was to plan and coordinate in-service for the faculty and staff. Three scheduled days, spread throughout the school year, served as dedicated time for different school level foci. As a teacher, in-service usually meant a morning faculty and staff meeting followed by a department meeting and time to work in our classrooms. Changing the energy and culture previously associated with in-service days was one of my first priorities.

One of the first steps was to work with the middle school principal to identify a strategic focus for the school year. Once identified, we incorporated feedback from faculty into the design and coordination of in-service days. The beginning of the year in-service day dedicated time to inform educators of regular updates to technology-related operational procedures (e.g., grading, attendance, acceptable use policy) and sessions designed to raise their awareness of strategies to integrate technology into classroom instruction. A combination of internal expertise along with commercial vendors provided a variety of break-out sessions. For example, while one teacher might choose a session on how to create podcasts with students, another could investigate the features of interactive

whiteboards. The menu of options allowed teachers to select sessions tailored to their needs.

In addition to in-service days dedicated to a particular campus or school level focus (e.g., Kula Hawai'i related activities, curriculum mapping), two early release days, in which all students were dismissed after lunch, allowed faculty to devote the rest of the afternoon to meet in K-12 content area groups. Curriculum coordinators would network with content area representatives from the three school levels (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school) to plan agendas and facilitate sessions. The primary objective of the initial K-12 faculty sessions was for educators to build collaborative relationships through curriculum sharing to identify gaps and overlaps, and negotiate next steps. Based on the prioritized needs and interests of the content area educators devised future agendas.

My professional development theory of action believes if educators were given the opportunity and choice to work collaboratively with their colleagues, then educators will demonstrate a noticeable change in their practice and student outcomes. For middle school, professional development dedicated to technology integration appeared to foster teacher confidence in the use of technology, development of credible teacher leaders willing to support their peers, and the opportunity to explore individual areas of interest. For the K-12 content area teams, the hypothesis was that the creation of "vertical" teacher teams would lead to greater collaboration and cohesiveness across the Kamehameha campus. My experience and involvement in a high functioning team of educators instigated the impetus to replicate this phenomenon by forming K-12 content area teams focused on curriculum, instruction, and/or assessment areas. There were two main objectives of the early gatherings: (a) to build relationships across the K-12 faculty content area teams, and (b) to engage in conversations that deepen understanding of the content area curriculum taught at each level. Three members from within the content area volunteered to serve as facilitators.

To execute the simple theory of action proved to be more complex than I had initially thought. There were thirteen different content areas and a common agenda were created.

Facilitators had some latitude to deviate from the agenda, as long as they achieved the desired outcomes. In hindsight, perhaps working closely with content area representatives to develop their facilitation skills, along with engaging principals to ensure their transparent support, could have fostered the sustained growth of a K-12 campus community of learners.

Educational Context

As I reflected on my journey as a classroom teacher, I recalled the diverse professional development that I had experienced over the years. The occasions I deepened my content area expertise and/or instructional strategies were transformative. The new information enhanced my ability to provide a quality education for my students. While I valued working with other educators in different capacities, the most rewarding collaborations were those instances when we combined our individual strengths and dedicated efforts to produce desired outcomes that exceeded initial expectations. As the curriculum coordinator and program designer charged with the orchestration of educators' continued professional development, as part of school improvement efforts, I felt compelled to research what are the optimal conditions and circumstances that enabled educators to change their practice in ways that ultimately resulted in enhanced student outcomes.

As the terms professional *development* and professional *learning* are often used interchangeably in the literature, for the purpose of this study the following descriptions will be utilized. Professional *development* will refer to "workshops, courses, programs, and related activities that are designed presumably to provide teachers with new ideas, skills, and competencies necessary for improvement in the classroom" (Fullan, 2007, p. 35). Professional *learning* will reference "an internal process in which individuals create professional knowledge through interaction with this information [being delivered] in a way that challenges previous assumptions and creates new meanings" (Timperley, 2011, p. 5). The distinction between professional development and professional learning is an important determinant in the identifying whether or not a particular intervention changed educator practice.

Research Questions

With this background and personal experience and the continued responsibility to help my fellow educators better serve our students, the three primary research questions that guided this study were:

1. What are the experiences that Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning?
2. How do the perceptions of professional learning experiences of Kamehameha educators compare with research on highly effective professional learning practices?
3. What professional learning characteristics support a'o, a traditional Hawaiian view of education?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Ku i ka māna.

Like the one from whom he received what he learned.

ʻŌlelo Noʻeau 1875 (Pukui, 1983, p. 202)

Introduction

I based my initial inquiry into educator professional learning primarily on my personal journey, and how my own learning influenced my professional practice. The responsibility for designing and facilitating professional development for educators steered me on a path to ensure that I apply the most effective practices to support adult learners, particularly in my context at Kamehameha Schools. Upon review of the literature, I present my examination of the knowledge base by (a) beginning with a focus on student learning outcomes, (b) clarifying the role and responsibility of the professional educator, (c) distinguishing between professional development and professional learning, and (d) framing my analysis on critical factors, conditions, and processes that optimize the learning for educators to improve professional practice.

As a school dedicated to the education of Hawaiian children, Kamehameha Schools identified a strategic focus to perpetuate Hawaiian culture and language. By understanding traditional Hawaiian education practices, Kamehameha educators may gain further insights and guidance on how to better support student learning. A portion of this study is also devoted to the exploration of possible considerations for educator practice as kumu (teacher) of Hawaiian students.

Before delving into the main focus of this study, the professional learning of educators, important is the clarification of what students should ideally possess in order to lead successful twenty-first century futures. By first articulating the preferred knowledge, skills, and dispositions for students, then the knowledge, skills, and dispositions educators should possess becomes more evident. Through the views of education researchers,

futurists and strategists and a review of Kamehameha educational policy that specifies twenty-first century learner outcomes for Kamehameha students, the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions for Kamehameha educators will emerge.

Student Learning Outcomes

To identify the prerequisites that students need to be productive, creative innovators and effective communicators in twenty-first century work environments, Wagner (2008) first examined “Old World” classrooms many students occupy and the “New World” of work they are destined to join. Wagner’s research unveiled a disconnect between the reality of education for most students and the current world of work, which led him to propose seven critical survival skills students should possess in order to be successful in future work place environments. The list of seven critical survival skills to be taught and fostered in schools included:

- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving,
- Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence,
- Agility and Adaptability,
- Initiative and Entrepreneurialism,
- Effective Oral and Written Communication,
- Accessing and Analyzing Information, and
- Curiosity and Imagination (Wagner, 2008, p. 67).

In their vision for the future of K-12 education, Houle and Cobb (2011) also identified problem-solving, collaboration, leadership, and communication as vital skills for students to develop. Additionally, Houle and Cobb specified that students aspire and prepare to serve in the roles of global citizens and leaders in their communities by:

- Attaining deep learning in liberal arts and the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM),

- Acquiring sophisticated skills of learning (i.e., analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and innovation),
- Comprehending the importance of civil discourse, the requirements of a democracy, and good citizenship,
- Utilizing and managing electronic tools,
- Maintaining a global orientation, understanding other cultures and being multilingual,
- Possessing integrity and sensitivity towards others, and
- Realizing the importance of personal fulfillment and the joy of being behaviors that affect these states (2011, pp. 95-96).

The aims for American education by Wagner, Houle and Cobb prescribed an explicit and holistic range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes for students to acquire.

In Zhao's (2009) analysis of American education, he noted that many in the United States are concerned about the "achievement gap" between the test results of American students and their international counterparts. Based on comparative standardized tests, such as the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), various Asian countries (i.e. Singapore, Japan, China) out-performed American students. Ironically, these same Asian countries strived to close the "creativity gap" with the United States when it comes to originality and innovation. Zhao observed "one of the greatest values of American culture expressed in education: the value of individuals" (p. 47). An example, according to Zhao, of the individuality and creativity celebrated and nourished in America is the elementary school talent show. Like other extra-curricular activities, the talent show is inclusive of all students as the show provides both the opportunity for student participation and the forum to showcase and appreciate the talent diversity not observed in the classroom.

Kamehameha Schools' mission statement, "to enhance the capability and well-being of Hawaiians through education" (Kamehameha Schools, 1996) calls for school leaders to

ensure that the renewed cultural vibrancy of the Hawaiian indigenous people is a viable part of Kamehameha educational practices. The schools' policy defined Hawaiian Cultural Vibrancy as "the relative state of Hawaiian cultural health and well being as indicated by the frequency, intensity, richness, authenticity and pervasiveness of Hawaiian language use, cultural practices, and the application of a Hawaiian world view" (Kamehameha Schools, 2009a). Three focus areas have been identified as the means to promote Hawaiian cultural vibrancy across the educational institution.

- Nohona Hawai'i - a Hawaiian way of life, or living Hawaiian culture.
- 'Ike Hawai'i - Hawaiian knowledge and understanding.
- 'Ōlelo Hawai'i - Hawaiian spoken and written language.

Due to rapid advancements in the world and shifting priorities at the school level, substantial changes to what students need to know and can do have been identified. As a result, imperative is that educators keep abreast of current developments and determine how to continue to engage and challenge students in creative ways. Capable and competent educators are needed to facilitate students' acquisition of 21st century knowledge, skills and dispositions. For educators to develop the necessary capacity to fulfill their critical role, there must be accommodations and time to allow for educators' adaptability to meet evolving expectations and conditions (Fadel, 2012).

In summary, students today must possess a diverse set of competencies to survive and thrive in the 21st century world of work. The "new" knowledge, skills, and dispositions required might not align with what most students experience in their present schools and classrooms. There is a sense of urgency that students in the United States will encounter a competitive work force on multiple fronts (e.g., local, national, and international) and, based on the results of international tests, their ability to successfully compete is in question. The development of individual strengths and talents has been a valued and recognized facet of American education that has fostered originality and creativity. For native Hawaiian students served by Kamehameha Schools, there is also a commitment to

the perpetuation of Hawaiian culture and language through its educational offerings as they prepare for leading successful post-secondary careers and lives.

Professional Educator

Among researchers who have cited the critical role educators contribute to the lives of students, Roy and Hord (2006) stated that “professional educators have the most direct influence on student learning and share the major responsibility and accountability to provide an effective instructional program so that students are successful learners” (p. 491). This assessment illuminated the significant and complex work educators must fulfill on a daily basis. As there are many facets to the role of educators, an inquiry to identify the specific qualities and nuances of educators who function at high levels of their profession was embarked upon. A search of the literature revealed the following descriptions of professional educators.

Authors Wiggins and McTighe (2006) examined the teaching life and presented four characteristics that they stated could be applied to any professional regardless of their respective field. Professionals (a) incorporate the latest developments from their field, (b) focus on their clients and adjust to meet the needs of those they serve, (c) are attentive to results, and (d) maintain high levels of professional standards in their practice and through peer review. Similarly, Wong (2011) indicated professionals possess “the knowledge, skills, qualifications, connections, and accountability to engage in their professions as advocates...they represent the best in their fields and are endorsed and respected by colleagues” (p. 142). Bowman (2013) further asserted that to develop one’s professionalism “is not a program, it is a way of life” (p. 18), and that is demonstrated daily by being self-controlled and self-motivated to elevate one’s performance and the capacity of others.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) stated to teach like a pro required engagement in continuous inquiry and improvement while serving as an significant member of a high-performing team. Also, professional educators are integral partners and contributors to the wider teaching profession. The commitment to foster a high level of professionalism in

schools could evolve through the design and management of educational organizations that embrace a learning orientation. Here lies the potential to develop as learning organizations that are sustainably vibrant and innovative in meeting the needs of students in the long term. Further, Senge et al. (2012) described the adoption of a learning orientation “means involving everyone in the system in expressing their aspirations, building their awareness, and developing their capacities together” (p. 5).

The commonalities in the aforementioned views highlight the vision of the professional educator who aspires to reach high expectations while working collaboratively with peers and dedicating himself to continuous improvement. These accounts illustrate the level of expertise, dedication and commitment educators would internally possess and its manifestation in their interactions with students and colleagues. In the school setting, the culture and conditions would nourish and foster a learning orientation for all members of the school community.

Professional Development and Professional Learning

In-service development, staff development, professional development, and professional learning are vehicles to promote a learning orientation, particularly for the adults in the school setting. Over the past twenty years, research on professional development has proliferated. For example, an advanced Google Scholar search on professional development with a date range from 1994-2014 generated 1,300,000 results. Research during this time indicated a call to reform the traditional model of professional development. Researchers (Borko, 2004; Penuel et al, 2007; Desimone, 2009) found infrequent, episodic professional development sessions traditionally, as experienced by educators, tended to have little effect on improving practice or student learning. This is due to a lack of opportunities for extended depth of study, or application in classroom which incorporated reflection based upon results (Wei et al., 2009; Learning Forward, 2011).

Traditional professional development are conducted via ballroom settings in the form of presentations, workshops, trainings, and conferences. This format posed challenges in

providing “just in time”, job-embedded, differentiated, or contextual relevance for the diversity of individual schools and educators in attendance (Katz & Dack, 2013). The one-size-fits-all mass settings, of which many traditional professional developments are conducted, pose a valid point in terms of meeting the needs of individual educators within their school’s context. The impetus for schools to change to a more effective model focused on the knowledge and skills educators must identify to address student needs (Ash & D’Auria, 2013). The subtle shift in specified outcomes called for educator learning to be situated in the learning needs of students. This contrasted with traditional professional development in which success was often based on educator satisfaction.

The Standards for Professional Learning (2011) stated that “professional learning is a process of continuous improvement focused on achieving clearly defined student and educator learning goals rather than an event defined by a predetermined number of hours” . The concept of continuous improvement is often associated with student learning and, perhaps, less so with educator learning. The specific needs of students should continue to drive educator learning.

Cole (2012) described professional learning as “the formal and informal learning experiences undertaken by teachers and school leaders that improved their individual professional practice and the school’s collective effectiveness as measured by improved student engagement and learning outcomes” (p.5). The theory of action for many professional learning initiatives is the effectiveness of the professional learning experience will lead to enhanced changes in educators’ practice and, eventually, result in improved student outcomes. Cole further identified the dynamic role of the school community in systemic improvement as being another factor in the complex change process.

Killion and Kennedy (2012) explained the focus of professional learning should begin with the analysis of expected outcomes for student achievement and the determination of student learning needs. Timperley (2011) elaborated on this shift in designing professional learning that places student learning and well-being at the center of the process and not as

by-products. Addressing student learning needs is the catalyst to determine educator engagement in what needs to change and evaluate the effectiveness of the change. Regarding this particular shift in professional learning, Timperley (2011) suggested a systemic approach that examined the impact of practice on multiple facets of student outcomes and incorporated educators setting goals for themselves and their students. A key objective would be educators and students becoming self-regulated learners.

Fullan (2007) presented a strategy to reform professional development to focus on educators continuous learning as a regular part of their day-to-day duties, in order to achieve high levels of student learning. The strategy involved personalization, precision, and professional learning by teachers. Fullan defined *personalization* as the ability to understand and address individual student needs on a daily and weekly basis. *Precision* referred to the timely, efficient manner in which student learning needs are attended to as they occur. In order for personalization and precision to happen, Fullan rationalized educators must continually learn how to adapt and improve their practice to better meet the needs of student.

According to developmental and educational psychologists Katz and Dack (2013), "Professional development is not professional learning unless it changes the way you think and behave" (p.33). This particular view of learning specified a definite change in thinking or behavior. Katz and Dack recognized that this approach to professional learning could raise questions regarding the status quo and may result in elevated levels of apprehension for educators. To assist educators in managing challenges that often arise in the learning process, the enlistment of experienced facilitators, equipped with protocols and strategies, could bolster educators' confidence level in the execution of new interventions (Learning Forward, 2011).

Webster-Wright (2009) proposed to reframe professional development by focusing on the learning aspect rather than the idea of professionals needing to be trained or developed through knowledge delivery. Authentic professional learning is a term introduced

by Webster-Wright, “to describe the lived experience of continuing to learn as a professional” (p. 715). The situations in which professionals felt their learning shaped their practice and may range from specialized formal professional development programs to networking with colleagues to connecting to experiences outside of the work place. Through research findings reported by Webster-Wright, most professionals are eager to learn about ways they may improve their practice and, rather than control or standardize the professional learning experience, how they may utilize their insights to better support other educators in their continued learning.

Wells (2013) presented a model for professional learning that involved teachers researching their own practice. The project drew upon the experience, expertise and reflective capacities of teachers’ ability to evaluate their practice. This study focused on teachers as researchers, and noted, when provided time and appropriate supports to develop their personal learning, teachers identified which changes to implement in their practice that enhance student learning. The literature substantiated the incorporation of specific elements of professional learning in the design of this project, and posed viable possibilities for consideration in conducting future educator inquiry projects.

Six Characteristics of Highly Effective Professional Learning

This study conducted a scan over the past ten years to investigate characteristics of highly effective professional learning practices. A review of eleven studies focused on the characteristics of effective professional development and professional learning on educator practice yielded nineteen related facets, as seen in Appendix A– Characteristics of Effective Professional Development/Professional Learning. The frequency of a particular topic citations in the literature on effective professional learning was an important factor in the selection and further examination of the following six characteristics: (a) focus on specific content/subject matter, (b) sufficient contact time and duration, (c) collective/collegial participation, (d) active learning methods, (e) coherence to educator knowledge and beliefs, and (f) sustainability.

Focus on specific content/subject matter. This characteristic illuminated one of the most commonly reported features of effective professional learning. Various studies have demonstrated the significant impact on educator practice and student outcomes when professional learning (a) specifically identified concepts and skills students are to learn, (b) deliberately addressed potential areas that may challenge students, and (c) clearly offered strategies for educators to apply in their current context as well as in the future (Wei et al., 2009; Desimone, 2009; Penuel et al., 2007; Yoon et al., 2007; Blank & de las Alas, 2010; Timperley, 2011). The research further suggested that by studying the same material that they are responsible for instructing their students, ensured that the specific subject matter is relevant and applicable rather than overly theoretical and scholarly (Beavers, 2009).

Sufficient contact time and duration. Identified as key elements, both the duration and span of time engaged in the professional learning activity resulted in intellectual and pedagogical changes. Desimone (2009) stated that research has not indicated an exact “tipping point” for quantifying the amount of time and duration for professional learning, but indicated support for activities that are distributed over a semester or intense summer institute (with follow-up during the school year) and included 20 or more hours of contact time.

Yoon, et al. (2007) identified nine studies that led researchers to conclude that educators who engaged in sustained, intensive professional development (e.g., 49 hours was the average for the nine studies) had a significant effect on student achievement. The delivery setting was either a workshop or summer institute and usually included follow-up sessions during the school year. Additionally, Blank and de las Alas (2010) analyzed common patterns among sixteen studies on professional development program designs that were able to measure the effects of educator professional development on subsequent student achievement. Fourteen of the programs spanned six months or more, and averaged 91 hours of contact time by educators. McMann et al. (2012) stated that, in order to effective, training programs should last three to five years and include supports such as,

materials, space, and expertise. Guskey and Yoon (2009) explained that effective professional learning involves a considerable time commitment and that time alone is not what will necessarily result in the desired outcomes. The time spent needs to be well structured, have intentional outcomes, and focus on content, pedagogy or a combination of the two.

Collective and collaborative participation. Researchers cited that an effective professional learning characteristic includes the involvement of educators from the same grade level, content area, or school learning and working as a collaborative team. A basic premise is having at least one other colleague to deliberate new learning and promote discourse that challenged educator thinking, heightened the probability for innovations to be implemented (Borko, 2004; Wells, 2013). Educators have an opportunity to process new information with their colleagues while maintaining the focus on being responsive to student well-being and learning needs (Timperley, 2008).

The Learning Forward (2011) learning communities standard stated that “professional learning within communities requires continuous improvement, promotes collective responsibility, and supports alignment of individual, team, school, and school system goals” (p.24). These conditions are further enhanced as the institutional environment fostered a spirit of continuous learning for all members of the school community that focused on common goals and promoted high expectations for both students and adults. The school community built time into the workday for members to meet collaboratively and engage in professional learning intended to improve one’s practice and student learning outcomes.

Beavers (2009) also specified the creation of a school environment that cultivated and valued diversity, openness, and critical review of practices. Through shared experiences, educators are primed for collaborative problem solving to construct creative solutions that are researched based and appropriate to the school context. Once the cohesive culture and appreciation emerged, the results provided the impetus needed for

educators to engage in critical dialogues intended to transform and improve teaching practice (Borko, 2004; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Penuel et al., 2007).

Active learning methods. The notion is engaged educators build upon new knowledge and skills through the personal construction of meaning and authentic application to their practice. Beavers (2009) stated adult learners thrive in conditions where they can self-direct their professional learning by engaging in opportunities that draw upon their experiences and support a variety of adult learning styles. The purpose and benefit must be clear along with how to apply the intervention to their setting. Additionally, learning sparked by personal inquiry can be most effective and long-lasting. A clear focus on intended student outcomes sets the stage for educators to integrate their new learning with ongoing feedback to facilitate the internal transference to routine behaviors (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Hirsh & Killion, 2009; Katz & Dack, 2013).

As an effective means to implement new interventions, Penuel et al. (2007) suggested ensuring opportunities for instructional planning and collaboration with other educators to discuss and consider specific curricular principles. Learning Forward (2011) identified specific examples of active learning strategies, such as, discussion and dialogue, demonstrations, inquiry, reflection, metacognition, co-construction of knowledge, practice with feedback, and problem-solving. Many of these strategies allow educators to assume the role of learners tasked to construct, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the knowledge and skills to be acquired individually and as part of a learning organization (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Wells, 2013).

Coherence to educator knowledge and beliefs. This characteristic referenced a core feature in effective professional learning studies that examined the extent to which professional development activities aligned with educator's prior knowledge and beliefs; and were consistent with school, district, and state reforms and policy (Borko, 2004; Desimone, 2009; Ingvarson et al., 2005). While effective educators continually seek opportunities to enhance their teaching to create optimal learning experiences for students, there must be

alignment between their view of the professional learning activity, their goals for students and own learning needs (Penuel et al., 2007).

On those occasions when the professional learning approach differed from the educators' personal beliefs about students, curriculum, and effective teaching strategies, Timperley (2008) recommended openly discussing the contrast between new ideas and their own, and assessing how the new approach might impact their students. Furthermore, Timperley explained without this explicit engagement in discourse, there is a high probability that educators will dismiss the new intervention as being irrelevant and unsuitable for their particular context.

Sustainability. The momentum established during professional learning identified factors and organizational conditions as they assisted educators' maintenance of this impetus and implemented the innovation (Blank, 2013; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Penuel et al., 2007; Yoon et al., 2007). Timperley (2008) stated, "a sustained improvement on student outcomes depends firstly on teachers developing strong theoretical frameworks that provide them with a basis for making principled changes to practice in response to student needs" (p.24). With a foundation on theoretical understanding established, educators are able to reference the understanding when challenged in specific teaching-learning situations. In addition, Timperley specified it is incumbent that educators developed professional inquiry skills to collect evidence which allowed them to self-assess teaching effectiveness and determine the adjustments needed. Given the multitude of factors which influence student learning outcomes, Hattie (2012) claimed the greatest effects occur when "teachers become learners of their own teaching, and when students become their own teachers" (p. 18).

According to the Implementation Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011), the integration of innovations into practice typically required between three to five years of continuous support. This allowed educators to deepen their understanding and address problems. Learning Forward proposed suggestions for the establishment of a

continued support model that ranged from ongoing workshops to coaching, personal reflection, and review of student learning results. Additionally, as an innovation, the incorporation of knowledgeable and creditable instructional coaches that provide demonstrations, resources, and one-to-one guidance showed promising results, but, according to Learning Forward, required further review.

For the purpose of this study, the six characteristics of effective professional learning, will provide a framework for the analysis of professional learning experienced by Kamehameha educators: (a) focus on specific content/subject matter; (b) sufficient contact time and duration; (c) collective/collegial participation; (d) active learning methods; (e) coherence to educator knowledge and beliefs; and (f) sustainability. These six characteristics frequently were cited in the literature and are not intended to be a definitive list of effective professional learning practices as the research on professional learning continues to evolve.

A'o Aku, A'o Mai

Hawaiian researcher Malcolm Nāea Chun based his findings on traditional educational practices as stemming from important concepts of relationships and involvement in traditional Hawaiian society and cultural practices. The Hawaiian educational perspective a'o aku (to teach) a'o mai (to learn) implied the dynamic cyclical nature of giving and receiving continually shifts between the one teaching and the one learning (Chun, 2011). The interrelationships built within a community relied upon individuals developing valuable knowledge and skills to become reputable experts in their specialty area. Specific mastery achievement was a critical aspect of the community's capacity to thrive as individuals were expected to develop and utilize their talents and expertise. By actively sharing these "gifts" with others, an enhanced sense of responsibility and interdependence permeated throughout the community when these conditions were present. The personal acquisition of high levels of skill fostered a sense of identity and recognition within the family and community. According to Chun (2011), the conceptual understanding and sense of

obligation intrinsically builds community through a system of support and interdependence that bond all members together (p. 84).

Alberta Pualani Hopkins, a scholar and teacher of Indo-Pacific languages, taught Hawaiian language and culture for more than 30 years. Hopkins (2002) is credited with the following description of *a'o aku a'o mai* that has been published as an introduction to the at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's faculty handbook.

Mai and *aku* are directionals that describe the flow of any action in relation to the speaker. Of significance here is that there is only *one* action, and that this action changes directions and moves back and forth.

So it is with the exchange of information and knowledge. Where English give us "teach" and "learn," Hawaiian gives us "*a'o aku, a'o mai*." When I gather with people in a classroom, we are all there to *a'o*. As I share my knowledge and understanding of a subject, from my perspective I am in the "*a'o aku*" mode; from the students' perspective, it is "*a'o mai*" time. When I stop speaking and they respond with their insights and experiences, they begin to "*a'o aku*", and it is my chance to "*a'o mai*". We are engaged, then, in a common activity with an elliptical, reciprocal flow that informs and energizes all participants. This may be imagined as a process inside which teacher and student are brought into being as common participants (Hopkins, 2002, p. 7).

Within this dynamic flow of information and knowledge exchanged between participants, a sense of collective responsibility for what transpired within these spaces would emerge. Hopkins indicated that if this ebb and flow pattern were to be established by the classroom participants, highly stimulating and enriching educational interactions would evolve.

According to Hopkins, the release of generational and institutional beliefs about specific roles within the classroom setting is required to achieve this state of mutual

participation in the learning process. The defined roles of teacher as the deliverer of knowledge and student as the receiver, as often experienced in a traditional western context, are transformed to embrace a reciprocal exchange of knowledge and, ultimately, benefit the greater community of learners. The inquiry into what professional learning characteristics support this dynamic relationship of a'o aku, a'o mai is relevant given the context of Kamehameha Schools as an educational institution serving Hawaiian learners and Kula Hawai'i.

Summary

The examination of the literature began with a review of the desired learning outcomes students would need to succeed in the future world of work. While the acquisition of academic knowledge continues to be part of the equation, a greater emphasis on development of 21st century skills, attitudes, and behaviors is critical. With the idealized priorities for students' comprehensive education in mind, the current literature illuminated the role and responsibility of the professional educator as an influential agent. To achieve high levels of proficiency as a professional educator requires personal commitment to keep abreast of current educational developments. This is done through continuous learning and working collaboratively with colleagues to improve practice driven by student results. As members of the educational community, educators contribute to their profession in a myriad of ways. There is an underlying assumption that the school setting exists as a learning organization dedicated to build and strengthen the collective capacities of all within the system.

In review of the processes by which educators engage in continuous learning, the terms "professional development and professional learning" are prevalent. During the scan of the literature, these terms were often used interchangeably and with varying definitions. Possibly due to its more common use, professional development has been increasingly scrutinized for a number of reasons. Three examples of this scrutiny include (1) the manner in which districts and schools have conducted the professional development (e.g. large

ballroom settings); (2) the degree to which educators acquire the identified skills, develop the necessary competencies, implement the new ideas; and (3) the determination of whether results indicated improvements in educator practice and/or student learning. The concept professional learning has shifted the emphasis to focus initially on student learning needs that informed and provided the impetus for educator practice enhancement and attainment of student learning goals. There is an analytical element of systemic inquiry approach of the professional learning sequel that attempts to study the dynamic process of the learning acquisition experienced by both the educator and student as learners. The discussion regarding professional “development” and professional “learning” warrants continued monitoring as educators and researchers conduct further studies.

As a focus for continued inquiry into improving education outcomes, professional development and professional learning has garnered much interest in the United States and abroad. The basic premise is if there are enhanced changes in educator knowledge and skills, then the result would lead to improved classroom practices and student outcomes. The examination of literature identified nineteen characteristics of effective professional learning practices. The review led to the selection of six characteristics of effective professional learning as a cross reference for this study: (a) Focus on specific content/subject matter, (b) sufficient contact time and duration, (c) collective/collegial participation, (d) active learning methods, (e) coherence to educator knowledge/beliefs, and (f) sustainability.

Lastly, the inquiry into a Hawaiian view of education conduct in this study’s context was opportune. The Kamehameha Schools’ mission to create educational opportunities into perpetuity with the explicit intent to improve the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiians is shaped by organizational strategic plans, policies and educational initiatives. As the schools move forward into the future, time to review and reflect upon traditional Hawaiian educational practices to better serve and advance native Hawaiian students and the larger community is fitting.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

E kuhi kuhi pono i na au iki a me na au nui o ka `ike.

In teaching, do it well; the small details are as important as the large ones.

`Ōlelo No'eau 325 (Pukui, 1983, p. 40)

Overview

This chapter explains the qualitative methodology design selected for the study. First, I will review the purpose of the study. Second, I will describe the rationale for the research methodology selection. Third, I will continue with an explanation of the context, including my relationship to the participants. To conclude, I will describe the process and procedures of the study, such as (a) preparation, specifically research design and participant recruitment; (b) data collection; and (c) data analysis.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the professional learning experiences of Kamehameha educators that they describe as being valuable for improving their practice. As expectations for student learning outcomes continue to rise, educators are tasked to prepare students to achieve more rigorous and challenging standards. A primary driver for the study was based on a predominant theory of action which reasons the improvement of educator's practice through professional learning will lead to enhanced student outcomes (Desimone, 2009). While a substantial investment has been dedicated to educators' professional development, often unclear is whether the intended outcomes of participation result in enhanced professional practice that leads to improved student learning. By inquiring directly with educators about specific professional learning that they perceive as valuable to their practice, I seek to acquire a deeper understanding on how to optimize professional learning for educators. The three primary research questions that guided this study were:

1. What are the experiences that Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning?
2. How do the perceptions of professional learning experiences of Kamehameha educators compare with research on highly effective professional learning practices?
3. What professional learning characteristics support a'o, a traditional Hawaiian view of education?

Methodology

The selection of a qualitative research methodology for this study was prompted by the aim to understand the professional learning of educators through their own recollection of highly valued professional learning experiences. In the review of qualitative research methods by Creswell et al. (2007), five traditional qualitative designs were noted 1) narrative research, 2) case study, 3) grounded theory, 4) phenomenology, and 5) participatory action research. Creswell further described phenomenology as being best suited for studies in which "the researcher seeks to understand the lived experiences of persons about a phenomenon" (p.241). Other researchers defined phenomenology as the study of conscious "phenomena" (Greek origin, meaning to show oneself; to appear) with the intentional focus on how human beings make sense of the identified subject matter through their perceptions, interactions, and realizations (Patton, 2002; Sanders, 1982). The primary phenomenological philosophy aligned with my personal beliefs that it is critical to inquire with participants directly involved in order to gain a more informed and holistic view of the studied phenomenon. To gather rich data that describe human experiences, Patton stated the process calls for methodologically and thoroughly recording the perceptions, descriptions, feelings, judgments, memories, and conversations of others, which are meticulously documented by participant observation and in-depth interviews. Moustakas (1994) related that general or universal meanings are derived from the individual descriptions.

In the review of the literature, my personal experience, and philosophical beliefs regarding professional learning lead to the selection of a phenomenological research approach. In particular, the acquisition of knowledge in teaching and learning is a highly personal experience and inquiring directly with educators about their valued learning experiences are important facets of my own beliefs that resonate with phenomenological study.

Context

Kamehameha Schools is a statewide educational system supported by a trust endowment founded in 1887 by Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the great-granddaughter of King Kamehameha I. This private educational institution currently encompasses three K-12 campuses on O'ahu, Hawai'i, and Maui, and 30 preschool sites statewide. The combined student enrollment of 7,000 distinguishes Kamehameha as the largest independent school system in the United States. The school mission is to improve the capability and well-being of Hawaiians through education (Kamehameha Schools, 1996).

As an integral part of Kamehameha School's commitment to achieving educational excellence for the serviced students, they support the schools' employees and their pursuit to enhance professional knowledge and skills (Kamehameha Schools, 2009b). Besides annually scheduled in-service days and other required trainings, Kamehameha educators have optional professional development programs available, but with some restrictions and stipulations specified for certain employee work groups (e.g., faculty). Participation in these professional development programs provide varied benefits, such as career advancement credits for faculty members, reimbursement for tuition and workshop fees, and partially to fully-funded attendance to local and mainland conferences.

For the purposes of this study, educators designated as faculty members include teachers, librarians, and counselors, were recruited from each Kamehameha campus located on the islands of O'ahu, Hawai'i, and Maui. Intended to gain an understanding of their perceptions regarding effective professional learning that leads to improved practice and

enhanced student outcomes, the focus remained on those educators who have direct academic, social, and emotional connections to students.

Finlay (2009) cited it is important that researchers maintain self-awareness of their own subjectivity, vested interests, preferences, and assumptions throughout the research process so as to be receptive to emerging themes. As a Kamehameha employee for over thirty years, I participated in many of the professional development opportunities mentioned by study participants. In the role of practitioner-researcher, essential was maintenance of an open perspective and neutral stance throughout the research process. Also important was the need to establish conditions in which study participants felt comfortable openly sharing their professional learning stories. Additionally, paramount was the honoring of educators' willingness to participate in this study by fostering a sense of trust and respect as we treated their stories with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Preparation

Kamehameha Schools routinely administered staff surveys to provide feedback on a variety of school-related topics. Acquiring permission to review school survey data on staff perceptions related to professional development was of particular interest to this study. To do so, I requested and received approval to examine school survey data from the campus education leadership team led by the Vice President for Campus Education and the Heads of School from the three Kamehameha campuses.

Two requested sources of Kamehameha staff perception data served to provide context for the initial development of the participants' interview questions. The first source was the 2012 WE LEAD™ Staff Survey conducted by an external vendor contracted by Kamehameha leaders (Successful Practices Network (SPN), 2012). The 397 respondents were employed at one of the three Kamehameha campuses and identified themselves as teachers/instructional staff (74%), support staff (20%), and department heads (6%). The following survey statements and related results in Table 1 helped to form my interview questions.

Table 1

Results of Select SPN Survey Responses by Kamehameha Educators and Educators Nationally

Statement	% of Kamehameha Respondents in Total Agreement	% of National Respondents in Total Agreement
(THEME: Coherent Vision)		
20. Professional development is aligned to school goals.	67%	72%
(THEME: Culture of Learning)		
25. I want to learn new ways of teaching students.	84%	86%
26. I seek out professional development opportunities.	84%	84%
29. School administration expects me to collaborate with other teachers to improve my teaching.	58%	76%
37. Staff are expected to adapt their practices to meet the needs of all students.	80%	90%
(THEME: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT)		
18. I have the resources to be an effective teacher.	72%	63%
46. People in this school know their responsibilities.	63%	63%
N=397	(WE LEAD™ Survey Report, 2012)	

A second source of staff perception data (Kamehameha Schools, 2011) was generated from a Kamehameha education group initiative (i.e., Ka Pi'ina Education Workforce Capacity-building Project, abbreviated title "Ka Pi'ina") that spanned both campus and community education programs. The Kamehameha Research and Evaluation Department facilitated the development, administration, and analysis of the Ka Pi'ina project surveys. Professional growth and renewal was one of four major focus areas for this particular initiative. The Ka Pi'ina 2011 Perception Survey was distributed to 1,086 eligible education group staff members and 807 (74.3% response rate) completed the survey (Kamehameha Schools, R.& E. D., 2011). Respondents encompassed educators at the

Kamehameha campuses and also those serving in Kamehameha community-based education programs.

Also, the Ka Pi'ina survey reported on staff perception related to professional development. The results for the 2011 survey indicated approximately two-thirds, or 66%, of the respondents agreed with the statement item, "Last year, my professional development experiences were useful to me" (Kamehameha Schools, R.& E. D., 2011). In addition, the Ka Pi'ina 2011 Perception Survey provided an open-ended comment section for each focus area. In a summary of the educator comments related to professional growth and renewal, feedback included:

- Provide more opportunities for professional growth
- Process for Professional Development
 - Provide time to engage in professional development activities
 - Create policies to ensure consistent opportunities
 - Collaboration between staff and supervisors
- Keep staff accountable to professional development activities
- Allow staff to generate own professional development activities.
(Kamehameha Schools, 2011, p.22)

The data provided in the SPN and Ka Pi'ina perception surveys implied an overall favorable view of professional development at Kamehameha, and indicated possible topics for further exploration. The selection of a qualitative phenomenological research approach, and the examination of these two surveys results, lead to the selection of appreciative inquiry approach that served as the conceptual framework for the data collection process.

Research Design

David Cooperrider's concept of appreciative inquiry influenced the formation of interview questions. As an organizational change framework, appreciative inquiry based itself on the premise that organizations change in the direction in which they inquire (Evans, Thornton, & Usinger, 2012). One fundamental belief is, within each organization, they can

use the strengths as motivators for positive change. When members of an organization inquire into the strengths and positive attributes of their organization, these foci have the potential to serve as catalysts for innovation and other positive possibilities (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001).

The Appreciative Inquiry 4D Cycle was the impetus for the design of interview questions for the focus group sessions. The description of each appreciative inquiry stage, provided by Evans et al. (2012), was modified to outline a plan for the interview protocol. Figure 1 is a model of the appreciative inquiry process with a brief explanation of each stage.

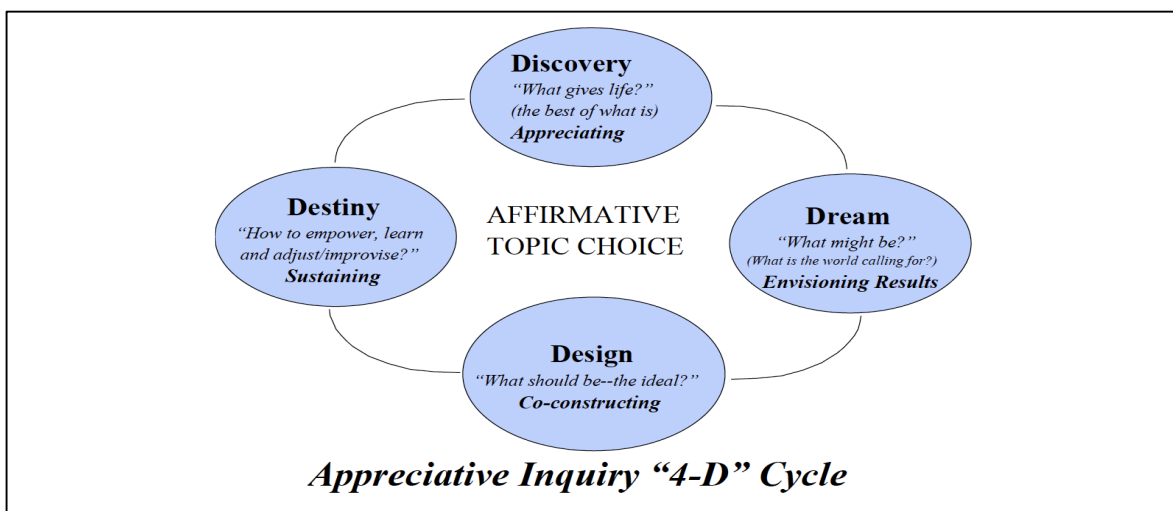


Figure 1. Diagram of AI Process Steps. Adapted from A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & D. Whitney, 2001).

Cooperrider and D. Whitney (2001) state the following from their research:

Stage 1: Discovery – (Appreciating) In this early phase, participants share stories and evidence in which they identify highlights of past professional learning that were most valuable for enhancing their professional practice. Deeply held values leads to further inquiry in establishing the organization’s “positive core” (valued traditions, accomplishments, assets). Stage 2: Dream – (Envisioning Results) Participants visualize peak possibilities based on core

values and successes shared during the discovery stage and aspire to build a shared vision. Current reality is often challenged. Stage 3: Design – (Co-constructing) Participants propose new possibilities based on their enhanced awareness of professional learning successes. Stage 4: Destiny – (Sustaining) During this stage, an organic blending of historic, positive traditions and strengths combine to act as convergence zones for people to connect and empower one another (p.30)

Table 2 illustrated the connection between the focus group questions and the research questions. The specified interview prompts were intended to stimulate participants' response to answer the primary research question, *"What are the experiences that Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning?"*

Table 2
Research Question Link to Focus Group Questions

Research Question One: What are the experiences that Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning?	
Focus Group Interview Questions	
a)	Besides the activities listed under Kamehameha Policy 420.40 Learning and Development, what are other PD/PL opportunities that you and/or others at your school participate in?
b)	Put + next to those activities that you feel were valuable to your professional learning.
_____	1) In-Service "B" Credit
_____	2) National Board Certification
_____	3) Partial Tuition Reimbursement
_____	4) Professional Advancement Credit (for Salary Schedule A Employees only)
_____	5) Sabbatical Leave
_____	6) External Presentations by Kamehameha Employees
_____	7) Summer Study Grants
_____	8) Teacher Exchange/Special Assignment Program
_____	9) Internship/Job Rotation
_____	10) _____
_____	11) _____

Table 2 *cont'd*

_____	12)	_____
_____	13)	_____
_____	14)	_____
_____	15)	_____

- c) ***BEST EXPERIENCE.** As you reflect upon your professional learning experiences, recall a peak highpoint when you felt the most engaged, most valued, most effective, or extremely passionate about your participation? Take a few minutes to reflect, jot down notes on backside of handout if you find it helpful. Please share your story. What made it a meaningful experience? Who else was involved? Please describe the event in as much detail.
- d) In listening to each other's stories, what are commonalities that you heard?
- e) "Imagine it is 10 years from now, Kamehameha Schools has created and
- f) implemented conditions such that peak professional learning experiences is the norm on all three campuses. Envision what the school environment might look like and feel like." On the blank sheet of paper, create a drawing to illustrate this vision.
- g) What would it take to make this dream a reality?

Table 3 outlined research question two and the analysis of participants' responses with highly effective professional learning elements identified in the literature. Examination of the participants' comments, as related to their peak professional learning, determined if the following elements of highly effective professional learning were evident in educators' experiences.

Table 3

Research Question Link to Participants PL and Highly Effective PL

How do the perceptions of professional learning experiences of Kamehameha educators compare with research on highly effective professional learning practices?

Selected Elements of Highly Effective Professional Learning Practices

- a) Focus on specific content/subject matter
- b) Sufficient contact time and duration
- c) Collective/collegial participation
- d) Active learning activities
- e) Coherence to educator knowledge and beliefs
- f) Sustainability

To investigate research question three, What professional learning characteristics support a'o, a traditional Hawaiian view of education?, I further examined cases in which the participants identified professional learning interactions as dynamic and/or reciprocal in nature. The analysis of participant responses would illuminate if commonalities and patterns emerged from the group.

Participants

To recruit study participants from each Kamehameha campus, a written request was submitted to the Kamehameha campus education leadership team seeking permission to invite K-12 faculty members to participate in a focus group related to their professional learning (see Appendix B – Request Permission to Seek Voluntary Faculty and Administrator Participation in Professional Learning Study). After the leadership team granted permission, I communicated two possible options for the head of school or principals to consider to determine the next steps: (a) As the practitioner-researcher, I will attend a faculty meeting to, briefly, explain my study, seek interested participants, and distribute an informational flyer, or (b) create a recruitment email with study information for the principal to distribute to his faculty (see Appendix C – Recruitment Flyer).

The sampling strategy selected for the study was *maximum variation* (heterogeneity) *sampling*. According to Patton (2002), this sampling strategy strived to illuminate the major themes emerging from wide-spread diversity, by which similarities are of “particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a phenomenon” (p.235). In addition, Patton stated, when selecting a small sample with wide variation, two outcomes arise which are important for qualitative studies: (a) high-quality, descriptive detailed accounts; and (b) important commonalities emerge from across cases. Participants recruited were K-12 faculty members (i.e., teachers, librarians, and counselors) from across the three Kamehameha campuses. A focus group session was scheduled at each campus with approximately five to nine volunteer participants from varied educator

backgrounds. These varied backgrounds included years in education profession, years at Kamehameha, subject area, grade level, and gender.

As faculty members expressed their willingness to participate, I noted their school level, content area, and gender in an attempt to ensure maximum variation sampling. Due to the sample size of participants, approximately five to nine per campus, compared to the actual faculty population, which ranged from approximately 100 to 300 depending on the campus, I intended to select a diverse group of participants in terms of grade levels, subject areas, teaching experience, years at Kamehameha, and gender from the initial group of volunteers. I informed participants of their selection by email and sent a copy of the consent form with potential interview questions for their review prior to the scheduled focus group (see Appendix D – Consent to Participate in Focus Group). The consent form described the purpose of the study and the procedures for audio recording the session.

A confidentiality clause modified participants' names and any other potentially identifiable information in the final report. The audio-recorded interviews are held confidential and destroyed at the conclusion of the study. Participants would have an opportunity to preview the session transcription for accuracy prior to analysis. As their participation in this study was voluntary, one section informed participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty. To prevent possible violations of participants' privacy, I asked all focus group members to respect the privacy of the others by not disclosing any personal information shared during the discussion.

Participants were informed their focus group interview session would last approximately two hours and refreshments would be served. The selected campus location for each session was intended to be convenient for participants with little to no disruptions. For two Kamehameha campuses, I attended faculty meetings to present the research inquiry, invite participation, and distribute my contact information via flyer. For the third Kamehameha campus, the principals agreed to distribute an email to their faculty with comparable information.

The set size of the focus groups ranged from five to nine members. At one campus, the initial interest exceeded the maximum range. In order to stay within the predetermined group size range, I selected nine faculty members dispersed from among the three school levels who could attend the scheduled meeting day and time.

At the other two campuses, educators were less responsive to the initial request for faculty volunteers. I contacted other educators from these campuses who assisted in the recruitment of additional faculty members. Five educators volunteered for the second campus focus group, and seven educators agreed to participate in the third campus focus group. Due to varied schedules of availability during the pre-arranged day on the third campus, two individual interviews and two smaller focus group sessions with two and three participants were conducted. Each of these sessions lasted approximately one hour. With a smaller number of participants in these sessions compared to the previous two campuses, participants elaborated upon their responses and provided specific details.

As participants arrived for their respective focus group session, they helped themselves to refreshments and completed the study consent form. In addition, I asked participants to provide information on their gender, content area specialization, grade level, number of years as an educator at Kamehameha, and total number of years in the field of education on a demographics form. Participants also reported their highest level of educational degree attainment.

Data Collection

A number of factors served as a basis to conduct the study in which educators share their professional learning in focus groups on each of the three Kamehameha campuses. Unlike one-on-one interviews, the focus group participants had an opportunity to hear the views of other participants and encouraged to elaborate beyond their initial response. The exceptions were the two participants interviewed individually due to scheduling constraints. While the expectation was not to reach consensus or even agree with one another, the

objective was to obtain high-quality data in a context where people reflect on their own experiences in light of what others encountered (Patton, 2002).

As various school surveys gathered staff perceptions related to professional development, the intent of the focus groups sought more specific and in-depth data. In delineating the advantages of focus group interviews, Patton (2002) stated that (a) data collection is cost-effective in the ability to connect with a number of people in a short period of time; (b) participant interaction can enhance the data collected; (c) assessment of diverse or common views can be quickly made; and (d) participants tend to find the experience enjoyable.

While limitations are inherent in any data collection, Patton noted the following related to focus groups: (a) there are restrictions on the number of questions asked; (b) the skill level of the facilitator and group members to manage the conversation should be high; (c) participants with minority viewpoints may not share as freely; and (d) to ensure confidentiality can be a challenge in a group setting. As a result, the following adjustments mitigated the above limitations during the study: (a) the establishment of five core questions asked during the 90-minute focus group session; (b) a practice focus group session with a group of four non-Kamehameha colleagues was conducted prior to orchestrating the study focus groups, (c) attention to sufficient wait time for participants to respond to verbal prompts; and (d) participants' agreement to respectfully keep viewpoints shared by other participants confidential.

Introductory Activity (Appreciative Inquiry [AI]-Discovery Phase). Participants completed a handout for the focus group session as a means to provide additional context related to the study (see Appendix E – Participant Handout). Participants were presented with a list of professional development opportunities listed under Kamehameha Policy 420.40 Learning and Development. They were encouraged to take notes and refer to this handout during the session.

The next activity on the Participant Handout instructed participants to place a plus sign (+) alongside the activities they felt valuable to their professional learning, and to add other examples to the list. Each participant selected his or her top two to three examples to share with the rest of the group.

Key Questions. I asked participants, “How does making this distinction between professional development and professional learning align with your thinking?” The rationale for inquiring into participants’ understanding of the professional development and professional learning terminology intended to scaffold the recollection of professional development/professional learning and not originally intended to be a major focus of this study.

To facilitate participants into the deeper reflection of their professional learning, I asked participants to reflect upon their various professional learning experiences and recall a peak, or high point, when they felt most engaged, most valued, most effective, and extremely passionate about their participation. Allotted five to ten minutes, participants quietly reflected and jotted down notes on the backside of their handout if they found it helpful. Afterwards, participants shared their professional learning story and described the event with as much detail as possible. What made it a meaningful experience? Who else was involved? How did this experience influence your work?

There was no predetermined order for responding, and participants spontaneously shared one at a time. After all participants revealed their peak professional learning experiences, they recalled, from listening to the different stories if they made any connections with one another.

Envisioning Results and Co-constructing (Appreciative Inquiry–Dream & Design Phases). The next activity asked participants to visualize ten years into the future: Kamehameha created and implemented conditions such as the peak professional learning experiences shared during the focus group session. These learning experiences were the norm for everyone who is a part of the schools. They created a drawing or symbol to

illustrate what this vision would look like on a 3"x 5" index card. What would it be like for students? What would it be like for adults? Participants, then, wrote a sentence to describe their vision.

In order for their visions to become reality, I asked participants, "What seed would they like to see planted today?" The final culminating prompt asked participants if there was anything they thought should have been asked about professional learning, and if they had anything to add to the discussion.

Data Analysis

The audio recordings from each focus group session were commissioned to an online transcription service provider specialized in producing written transcripts from pre-recorded events. The transcription service recorded time stamps and verbatim dialogue in a word document. I reviewed the transcript to correct spelling and identify questionable words. Next, I emailed all participants a copy of their session's transcript to review for accuracy.

In the first cycle of analysis, I selected In Vivo Coding as the method for conducting the preliminary review of the focus group data. Saldana (2009) noted that In Vivo Coding is suitable for studies in which the researcher aimed to prioritize and value the voices of participants. Since this coding method targeted a word or short phrase uttered by the participants, the possibility of capturing folk or indigenous terms often used by participants was present.

To organize the first cycle of coding, I created a three-column word template with the participants' pseudonyms placed in the far left column and their verbatim responses to key focus group questions in the middle column. The third column displayed In Vivo Code words or phrases that corresponded to each participant's responses in column two (See Appendix F – Sample Initial Coding by In Vivo).

After the selection and documentation of the initial codes, a second cycle of coding occurred. The purpose of the second cycle reorganized and reanalyzed the data coded in the

first cycle (Saldana, 2009). Pattern Coding was the method chosen to condense the number of categories and themes initially identified. As I reviewed the In Vivo Codes, three main components to search for included (a) categories or themes; (b) causes/explanations; and (c) relationships among people. This second coding template also organized information into three columns: (a) participant's pseudonym, (b) In Vivo Code word or phrase; and (c) highly effective professional learning characteristic code (see Appendix G – Sample - Second Level Coding-Patterns). This format allowed for ease in reviewing and identifying recurring themes in participants' comments.

Maxwell (2013) discussed two specific validity threats often raised during qualitative research studies. He proposed mitigating the effects of "researcher bias" (i.e., subjectivity of the researcher in making certain choices) and "reactivity" (i.e., the researcher's effect on the study participants) through, first, the researcher's examination of her possible biases and explanation of how she handles them; and, second, for the researcher to be cognizant of how she may influence what participants report and any inferences drawn.

To address the possibility of researcher bias, with regards to the recruitment and selection of study participants, the strategy seeks approval from Kamehameha campus leaders to engage faculty participation in an open and transparent manner. With two campuses, there was initial interest to meet the original goal of five to nine volunteer participants per focus group session. For the third campus, there was not sufficient interest to meet the minimal threshold sought by the advertised due date. To resolve the situation, I acquired assistance from an educator, and colleague familiar with my study, at the third campus. This colleague, then, recruited additional faculty, which resulted in the target number of study participants from across the campus at all three school levels (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school).

To control for researcher "reactivity" during focus group sessions, I conducted a trial focus group with cohort members from my University of Hawai'i educational doctoral program. The opportunity to rehearse prior to facilitating an actual focus group session

allowed me to overcome nervousness and gain confidence. The cohort members provided feedback on the clarity of the interview questions, and the manner in which the focus group was conducted (e.g., participant comfort level, researcher's receptiveness). Also, the practice session prompted my conscious attempts to ensure sufficient wait time for participants to gather their thoughts and deliberately maintain a neutral expression while participants shared their responses.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

I ka nana no a 'ike.

By observing, one learns.

I ka ho'olohe no a ho'omaopopo.

By listening, one commits to memory.

I ka hana no a 'ike.

By practice one masters the skill.

(Pukui et al, 1972, p.48)

Overview

As a means to gain understanding of educators' perceptions of their professional learning, this study served as a launching point to examine of professional learning experiences that Kamehameha educators identify as being valuable for enhancing their professional practice. This section organizes the results of the three major aims of this study:

- Research question one - *What are the experiences that Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning?*
- Research question two - *How do the perceptions of professional learning experiences of Kamehameha educators compare with research on highly effective professional learning practices?, and*
- Research question three - *What professional learning characteristics support a'o, a traditional Hawaiian view of education?*

Upon reflection of their professional development activities, educators describe the professional learning experiences in which knowledge and/or skill gained changed the way they thought and/or behaved related to their practice. This chapter will present the data

collected from focus group interviews with Kamehameha educators at the three K-12 Kamehameha campuses on O'ahu, Maui and Hawai'i.

Each participant received a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality during the reporting of the results. The study will use these pseudonyms to attribute selected comments to particular participants. The selected excerpts from the focus group sessions are portions of participants' verbatim responses aligned to the applicable research question. A critical attribute of this study highlights the voices of educators who voluntarily contributed their testimonies of valued professional learning. A discussion of participants' comments and a summary of the findings will conclude this chapter.

Participants

Tables 4 and 5 present a demographic overview of the participants' backgrounds related to their careers in education. The participants classified as secondary school educators taught grades seven through twelve, and those assigned kindergarten through grade six were in the elementary school classification. In Table 4, twelve of the twenty-one, or 57% of participants taught at the secondary school (SS) level as compared to nine (42%) at the elementary school (ES) level. There were eighteen participants who possessed advanced degrees (i.e., masters and doctorates) and three who had bachelor degrees, or 85% and 14%, respectively. There were thirteen (62%) females and eight (38%) males.

Table 4

Distribution of Participants based on Gender, Degree Earned and School Level Assignment

		<u>Female^a</u>		<u>Male^b</u>		Total
		ES	SS	ES	SS	
Highest Degree Earned	Bachelors	1	2	0	0	3
	Masters	4	4	3	4	15
	Doctorate	1	1	0	1	3
	Total	6	7	3	5	

NOTE. ^a*n* = 13, ^b*n* = 8, ES = grades K-5, SS = grades 6-12

Table 5 displays a diverse range of content area specialization as indicated by participants. Twelve of the twenty-one participants taught core academic subjects at the elementary or secondary level. The remaining nine participants were classified faculty members from other specialists' areas.

Table 5

Distribution by Content Area Focus of Participants

Content Area	<i>n</i>
Core Subjects (Elementary)	4
English/Language Arts	3
Mathematics	1
Science	3
Social Studies	1
Health and Physical Education	4
Counseling/Academic Support	2
Library and Media Technology	3

*Languages, Performing Arts, and Visual Arts were not represented.

Figure 2 presents the distribution of participants by years of experience as an educator at Kamehameha versus their overall total years in education. In the review of participants' years as an educator at Kamehameha, there appeared to be an even distribution across the five time-span categories. While there were three participants who joined Kamehameha within the past five years, all had previous experience in education. Upon examination of participants' total years in education, the majority of the participants, or 71%, have been in the field of education for 16+ years.

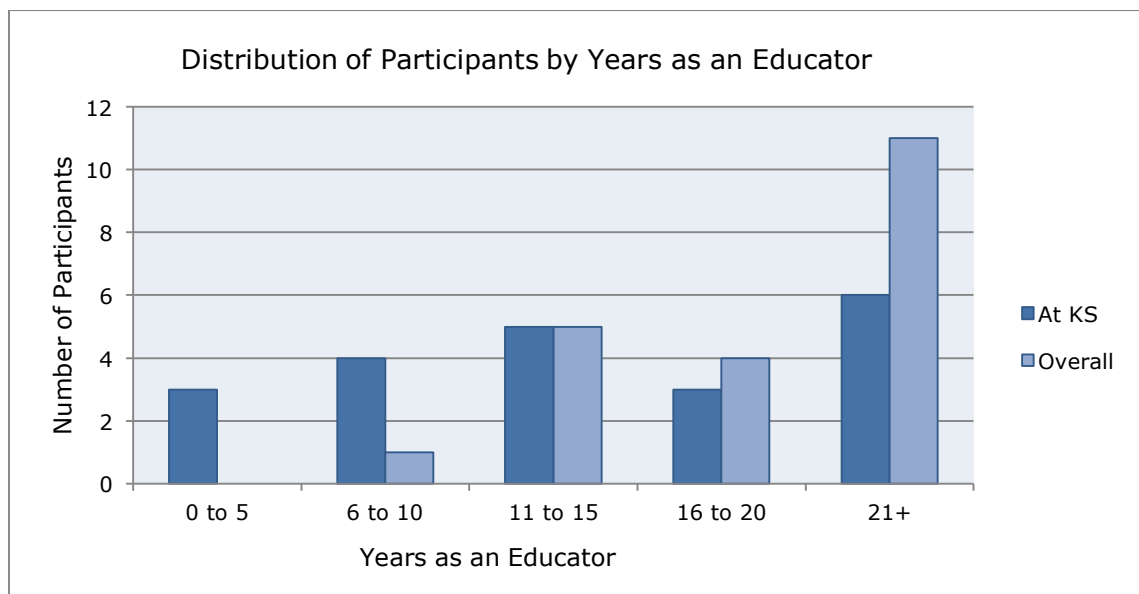


Figure 2. Distribution of Participants' Years in Education at Kamehameha and Overall Total. Adapted from focus survey (2013).

The contrast between the participants' number of years at Kamehameha versus their overall years in education indicates a more veteran group of educators. Fifteen of the 21 participants had 16 or more years in education, with eleven reporting over 21 years in education. Initially, this study did not identify the participants' years of experience as a primary focus, but may consider this trend in a future study.

Professional Development to Professional Learning

The clarification of key terminology was a precursor to collecting data from the participants. This step presented operational definitions of professional development and professional learning as two distinct concepts. Professional development is the activities in

which delivery of some kind of information is intended to influence your practice, while professional learning is instances in which the knowledge and/or skill gained permanently changed the way you think and/or behave regarding your practice. The participants' responses to these descriptions ranged from "totally new, did not initially think there was a difference" to "I've attended professional development, but to transfer to real learning took effort on my part to deepen my understanding and ability to effectively apply it to my work". I, initially, did not anticipate the differing viewpoints related to the terms professional development and professional learning. Perhaps a different approach that clarified key terminology might have alleviated some of the participants' confusion.

The participants' responses revealed a few issues being raised in the research about the effectiveness of transitioning educators' professional development from the concept of educator development to educator learning. The following participant responses reflected the varied reactions to the terms professional development and professional learning.

Leila's remarks indicated her familiarity with the term professional development and her unfamiliarity with the term professional learning. Leila remarked, "I'm very comfortable with professional development in terms of participating in activities but this professional learning where it actually permanently changes the way you think and behave, I've never seen that label."

Liane reflected whether there was a specific instance in which she made a change to her practice. To identify a possible catalyst and/or circumstances which caused this shift in practice had Liane wondering, "I'm trying to figure out what about it had me make the shift from PD to something that really inspired and changed the way I delivered instruction."

Stanton analyzed his process to deepen his professional learning. He identified specific tasks he needed to do in order for him to learn from the professional development activity. Stanton recollected:

Professional learning would only occur if I had taken time in the aftermath to reflect on what I had done.....unless I took some effort to journal, document, think about,

talk about it in a reflective way, I'm not sure that I was learning as much unless I did that. (Stanton)

Natalie likened professional development to students in a lecture-styled classroom where the onus is on the students to figure out how to apply their learning. Highly effective professional learning purposefully designed the structure to facilitate educators' ability to transfer their learning to their practice.

if I was to relate it to students, professional development is when we just lecture to them... here's the information and now, try and use it. But in a professional learning standpoint, it's more that we can apply and shift your thinking and help you grow. (Natalie)

Kāla'e identified professional development as attendance at an event and professional learning as the acquisition of new knowledge and skills to implement and share with others. The realization that professional learning is application to one's context, and collaboration with other educators as critical components was an enlightening clarification.

There is a difference between PD and PL and I didn't realize that until I really read it. Professional development, the actual attending of something... professional learning is what I take from it and possibly able to apply and share out. I attended many professional developments but do I always have professional learning? (Kāla'e)

Hoku summarized that professional development requests could result in professional learning, though it may not occur consistently. There are a variety of personal and contextual factors which contribute to whether or not an individual is ready to actualize professional learning. She elaborates,

Well you would want that the PD that you ask for will become PL. That doesn't always happen. But I'm sure that our institution would like more of that to happen,... It's hard to predict what's going to stick...it depends on the person, the content area or grade level he or she teaches, the stage in which they are at in their career. There's a lot of variables, how willing you are to consider new ideas and open

yourself up to new experiences, you know there's a lot of that to think about before the PL can really happen. (Hoku)

While participants' perspectives on "professional development and professional learning" terminology was not an initial focus of this study, based on their varied responses during the introductory phase of the focus group, posed an opportunity for further inquiry. There were participants not familiar with the term professional learning, but accustomed to references related to professional development. Others discerned that "development" suggested a passive reception of information, while "learning" may require more active engagement in order to internalize and actualize the knowledge gained.

Results of research question one: Educator PL experiences

What are the experiences that Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning? The discovery phase of the appreciative inquiry process involved participants sharing their personal stories of professional learning. I categorized individual responses from the focus group sessions based upon each participant's description of a peak professional learning. Participants characterized peak professional learning as a time in which they felt the most engaged, valued, effective, or extremely passionate about their participation. Based upon the participants' descriptions of their peak professional learning, three categories emerged: structured programs, personal interest, and external drive. If participants began with an explanation of an activity, such as the pursuit of a graduate degree or seminar attendance, I assigned their peak professional learning to structured programs category. If they started by recalling their inquisitiveness or inner desire as the catalyst for professional learning engagement, I categorized their experience as personal interest. Finally, if they cited an external source which prompted their subsequent professional learning experience, I noted this experience in the external driver group.

This conceptual clustering of participants' peak professional learning was intended to organize their experiences for synthesis purposes. There were thirty peak professional learning experiences cited by the twenty-one participants. Nine participants were challenged

to specify one peak professional learning and referenced two instances. Table 6 displays the twenty-one participants' peak professional learning responses organized into three broadly constructed categories that will serve as the basis for further discussion.

Table 6

Peak Professional Learning Cited by Study Participants

Professional Learning Impetus	# of Occurrences	% of Cases
Structured program: master/doctorate degree, certification, conference attendance, summer institute, mainland training, staff service project, external consultation, sabbatical	19	63%
Personal interest: continuous professional growth, informal/formal sharing of knowledge with other educators, desire to influence student learning	6	20%
External driver: common school goal, professional publications, mentor	5	17%

Note: Nine of the twenty-one participants cited two peak professional learning.

Structured Program

The structured program category encompassed peak professional learning experiences, in which, participants identified a formal course or activity that was facilitated by either an external (e.g., university, National Board, institute) or internal (e.g., Kamehameha curriculum initiative) source. Targeted outcomes; such as attainment of advanced degrees, certification, skill development, and cultural awareness, were achieved by the participants. A total of 19 out of 30, or 63%, peak professional learning aligned with a structured program. Seven participants specified a particular conference/training/seminar, of which, three were outside of Hawai'i. There were six instances in which participants identified graduate school (i.e., masters, doctorate program) as a peak learning experience. Three participants related how the National Board Certification process had an impact on

their practice, while another participant explained how engagement in an online certification program directly linked to her work with other educators. Two participants described a koa tree planting service project available to Kamehameha staff members. Lastly, a participant cited the ongoing partnership with a math consultant contracted to work with staff during the past few years. The following excerpts from participant discussion include a brief description of participants' peak professional learning and a segment of their comments.

Kāla'e shared a mainland workshop that he attended with others from his school as one of his peak professional learning experiences. He connected new learning to his classroom and during collaborations with other educators. The practical hands-on experience afforded Kāla'e an opportunity to delve deeper into instructional strategies that integrated the use of iPads:

Opportunity to travel with Kamehameha...to Boston...I could immediately realize what I can take that they're speaking of and apply it to the classroom or take and share with another teacher. (Kāla'e)

Hoku identified a leadership seminar she attended at an east coast university with two other educators from her campus as her peak professional learning. Acquiring knowledge from experts in the field and debriefing with a cohort of international educators was a stimulating experience for Hoku. She noted ideas she could bring back to her school:

Leadership seminar at Harvard...you feel like your time is not wasted. Two, the group is very small.... It's like a master's cohort kind of size...there was time for you to talk story from different people around the world actually....So it was an eye-opener for me and I think there were things there that I could bring back to our school that was really helpful. (Hoku)

Pat explained that graduate school and being "there for at least 2 years for the most part" provided for "continuous building changes not only what we do but also how we do it." Pat also shared that "Those skills that we build and as we fit that knowledge into it I think that's critical right now."

Leila described the quest for a specialized advanced degree as a unique professional learning opportunity that exposed her to fresh ideas, new information, and a diverse group of colleagues. The prospect of being able to select one's focus of study was highly appealing to Leila. She acknowledged during school in-service, there might be limited opportunities to choose a particular topic of interest and she was grateful for being afforded that possibility in a graduate program:

All of my other degrees were in education, elementary education and masters in curriculum. So library school, the ideas were so new, ... I really felt like I was learning lots of new information... For me that was a really exciting time and I guess it goes back to the choice and the desire to really want to learn. (Leila)

Matthew, along with two other participants, referenced the National Board Certification process, and the resulting impact on his teaching practice as being a peak professional learning experience. In particular, Matthew stated the certification process required in-depth self-reflection related to implementation of detailed lesson plans and the results on student learning outcomes:

It doesn't end just because you achieve. It's like it's there for the rest of your career so I'm still engaged with it because it becomes a part of you....I felt valued and effective in the process because you actually have to look at student growth and prove it and show the evidence for that. (Matthew)

Makana's experience with successfully navigating the National Board Certification process assured him that his instructional practices were sound, especially because his background was not in education. When Makana attained National Board Certification, the certification validated for him that he was on-track as he continued to progress in his growth as an educator. He related how achieving National Board Certification positively affected his self-efficacy:

National Board has really validated who I am as a practitioner. One because one I didn't go to school to be a teacher. I don't have a teaching certificate. I didn't start

taking education courses until this year with my master's program. So when they validated what I do in the classroom, it really made me feel good.... (Makana)

Natalie expressed how she valued her involvement in events and activities that broadened her awareness of Hawaiian culture. As someone raised on the continental United States, Natalie appreciated being in a work environment that provided opportunities to immerse in various Hawaiian cultural experiences. She felt humbled to learn about where she lives and her workplace also finds it critical to cultivate this learning:

Being from the mainland and not having a background in Hawaiian culture at all we have 'Ike Hawai'i meetings at middle school and lots of opportunity to experience culture by going off campus to experience the fish pond or lo'i, it has been such a gift to do those things and learn about where I live and what has become such a big part of me. (Natalie)

As an alternative to sending staff to mainland conferences, Haunani explained her school contracted external consultants to work with staff at the school site. Haunani described her experience with a math consultant who shared his expertise with interested staff members. While attendance at this particular professional development was optional, Haunani sought to improve her knowledge and skill through the consultant's multiple visits over the past few years. Although initially challenged to learn a new instructional approach, she willingly chose to participate and was able to immediately apply the lessons learned with her students:

Instead of sending a lot of people up to conferences, our campus is bringing people in... math guru on Singapore math...it's been fabulous. He's been coming consistently for I think 2 years....I feel like I'm in 2nd grade again but you just keep on learning.... it's just the point of doing practice so that's been really valuable.... (Haunani)

The variety of structured programs identified illustrated a range of experiences which engaged and stimulated participants to deepen their own knowledge and skills related to a

particular topic area. The participants explained how their involvement in the structured program personally impacted them and the results in their practice.

Personal Interest

Six, or 20% of the thirty peak professional learning experiences cited by the participants began through their personal initiative to pursue learning about a particular subject area. In the personal interest category, participants specified instances in which they willingly chose to explore avenues that served to enhance the learning of students (e.g., facilitating projects related to the schools' founder), peers (e.g., conducting workshops for educators) and/or their current knowledge base (e.g., stretching their preconceived notions when it comes to own learning).

Leina'ala explained that learning about the life of the school's founder was a vital source of inspiration and influence on her students. Through students learning about the life of Kamehameha Schools' founder, Bernice Pauahi Bishop, Leina'ala's vision included to have her students aspire to achieve worthwhile endeavors which have a positive impact on others:

We did a Hawai'i project leading up to Founder's Day...delving into who Pauahi was, her contribution. One woman, one decision, her legacy, how that affects people.... Watching the kids...look at her vision...this is you....you don't need to be from royalty. You're one person making one decision to make effective change in your life....to affect two people or thousands of people....empowering kids to positively make choices to influence change. (Leina'ala)

Coby shared his commitment to continuous learning, and how he strived to gain new knowledge that applied to his work with students. Afforded with opportunities to grow professionally, and with challenging subject matter, his experiences as a learner served as inspiration for students to persevere in their own learning:

My high point is just trying to gain more knowledge and trying to see how I can apply to these kids....a tech conference...really stretching the boundaries as a learner.

...So as intimidating as that is, ōlelo...intrigues me too....even considering taking a language class to show I can...just like you as students.... (Coby)

Kāla'e recalled a recent experience that stemmed from an aspiration to learn from another country's educational system efforts to incorporate technology into their school settings. He combined the goal to expand his network of professional connections with the desire to involve his son in the pursuit to learn from other cultures. Kāla'e's expressed excitement by the welcome received from all the schools he contacted. It was gratifying, as the gesture indicated a willingness to openly share, which lead to him interacting with students on how technology was used their classroom:

New Zealand trip...knew no one there...went on the internet...looked for schools that were doing one-on-one iPads....Emailed, asked if I could come, who I was, what I'm interested in and waited for a response. 100% of them replied, opening their doors....good feeling...they're open to sharing their thoughts, ideas,...their school to me....best thing...it wasn't the teachers that were teaching me. It wasn't their administration. It was their students....told me that whatever they're doing there must be good. (Kāla'e)

Noelani described how she has shifted from being primarily a professional development participant to a professional development facilitator. This focal change has resulted in Noelani striving to achieve a synergetic connection between other adult learners and herself, which leads to a sustained learning community. Noelani utilized her experiences as a learner to design lessons that generated dynamic engagement to achieve collective learning. She expressed a sense of responsibility to structure conditions to ensure the learning of fellow educators:

I provide more PD than I actually go to do PD....PD that I offer has to do with my high point as a learner....always striving to get that moment when things start clicking, you can see things start clicking....that moment where the lines really blur

between the teacher and the students, we're all kind of learning together...become a learning community....You have a direct responsibility for having all those things click into place and it's your colleagues. (Noelani)

Kealoha acknowledged her lack of cultural knowledge as a part-Hawaiian. As a result, a desire for growth in Hawaiian cultural competency as a kumu (teacher) at a Hawaiian school fueled her peak professional learning. These two factors merged as Kealoha sought venues to strengthen her Hawaiian cultural background. Pro-active in her search, Kealoha joined a committee of colleagues who were Hawaiian cultural and language specialists. She provided the insight of those less culturally versed to ensure and maximize opportunities for staff whenever Hawaiian cultural practices featured at the school level:

Even though I'm part Hawaiian, I'm not really well connected. My family doesn't practice Hawaiian, a little intimidated...how am I going to fit in...So I challenged myself, where I could learn more and decided to join the 'Ike Hawai'i committee as the most non-Hawaiian. I offer the other perspective why are we doing this or how do we do this so everybody understands it? (Kealoha)

In the descriptions of their peak professional learning, these participants recalled an internal motivator that served as a catalyst to further their own knowledge and skills. Oftentimes, it coupled the catalyst with reflecting upon how students or colleagues benefit from their new learning. Also, a number of participants showed interest in how their contributions might impact the broader school community.

External Driver

There were five, or 17% of the cases in which participants alluded to an external driver. The external driver, such as school goals, alternative models of instruction, mentors, functioned as a stimulus to engage participants and encourage receptiveness to new ideas and other ways of thinking and teaching. Two participants identified specific individuals considered experts in their field.

Kris stated that during the construction of their new school, there was a collegial and collective spirit among the staff members. This sense of community fostered a culture of collaboration and inclusiveness such that all members felt a responsibility for student achievement:

Willing to do what it took to accomplish the goal we created together. PD and PL...all the time, everybody has to learn a whole lot....core teachers and EAs would do the math...all sit in on the beginning and the end....language arts trainings and workshops together....all agreed that that's your core...can be taught throughout the curriculum... (Kris)

Catherine reflected how working at a school which served the Hawaiian population was a source of pride and inspiration to assimilate opportunities to further her cultural knowledge and interconnection. As an employee at a Hawaiian culture-based school, Catherine expressed her pride in the schools' accomplishments with students and what these achievements represented in the larger community:

if someone talks about the difference that makes this school different from any school I've been involved is that it serves a population, Hawaiian culture population. ...I have moments of inspiration, moments of being extremely passionate...whether it's sitting at a workshop, at graduation and the student is announcing what school they're going to. I'm very proud to be working in a Hawaiian school. (Catherine)

Jason recalled an experience that began with reading a professional journal article and challenged his current practice. His initial reaction to the new idea was to reject it. After a series of related events over an extended period of time, he eventually gained a better understanding of the new innovation and changed the manner in which he formatted his lessons. As his vexation dissipated, the heightened awareness of the new concept appeared to fuel a deeper inquiry, which culminated in the transformation of Jason's practice:

I read an article in a professional journal and I was arguing with the guy that wrote the article, but you get no response. So you go to your little professional community

of one, she agreed, article must be wrong...so better buy the book....still never satisfied....You go to a mainland conference, you hear the guy and then get the "why". "Oh, now that makes sense" and you change your format.... (Jason)

Pat stated how a facilitator of a professional development opportunity significantly enhanced his experience. The stories shared by others who previously attended the service project were an impetus for Pat's desire to meet the facilitator and experience what this individual had to offer.

Keawewai....Why that was different is not that we went outer island....I always wanted to meet Uncle Eli. He had a vision that I'd heard about for years. He's looking right at us, asking you where you came from.... (Pat)

Future Possibilities

The second phase of the appreciative inquiry process encouraged participants to dream about "what might be?" The study asked participants to imagine, in ten years, that Kamehameha created and implemented conditions such that peak professional learning was the norm across all Kamehameha Schools' campuses. They envisioned what the school environment might look and feel like. On a 3" x 5" index card, they created a drawing to illustrate their vision. Figures 3-6 represent a few examples with a brief explanation by the participant.

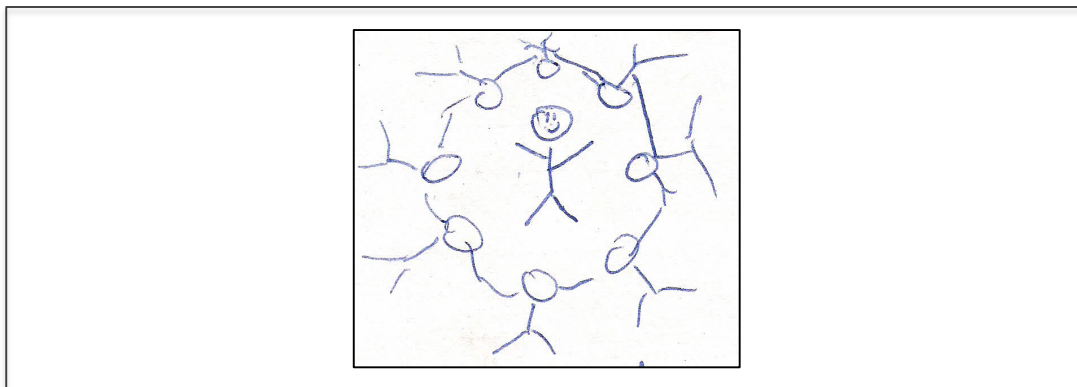


Figure 3. Kenneth's Vision of the Future. Intentional focus in on the needs of the students and their success. There is happiness and harmony everywhere with students and staff. Adapted from Kenneth (2013).

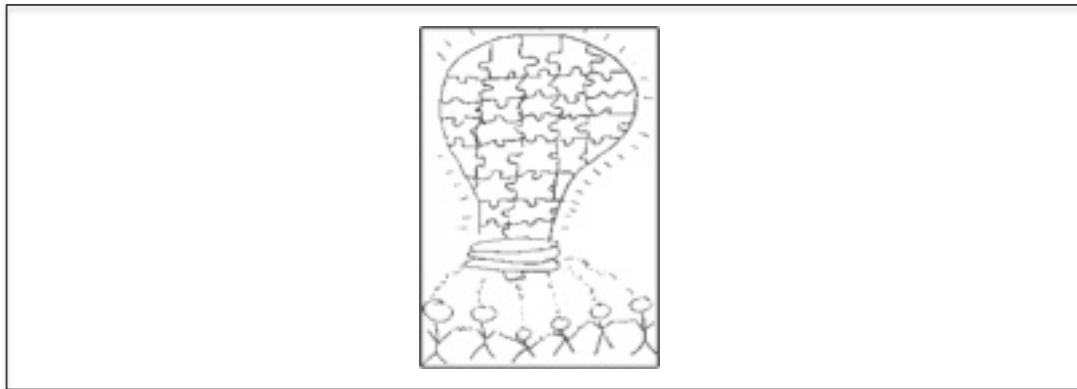


Figure 4. Natalie's Vision of the Future. A community of adults and students creating and collaborating together, putting together ideas that contain a continuous growth of opportunity. Adapted from Natalie (2013).

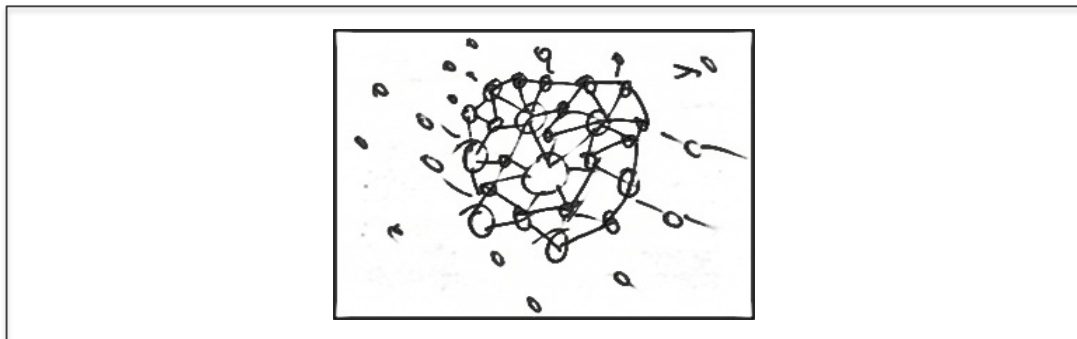


Figure 5. Stanton's vision of the future. Excitement + synergy & diffusion for learning. Massive amount of sharing of ideas—synergy if everyone were turned on to learning. Adapted from Stanton (2013).

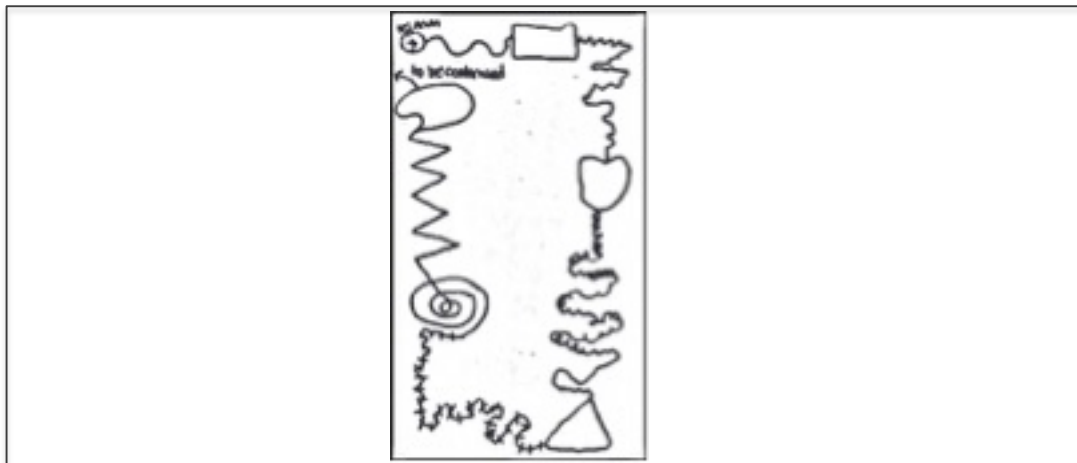


Figure 6. Barb's vision of the future. The journey begins for teachers and their students – the learning and discourse blossoms and the “magic” peak professional learning experience occurs. Teachers and their students are changed, revel in it, master it, and move to the next...continuum of evolving learning and passions for meeting needs. Adapted from Barb (2013).

In the participants' visions of the future, participants identified a collaborative sense of educators and students working together to meet student needs and achieve desired outcomes. The dynamic process of learning together generated synergetic flow of energy that resulted in continuous growth and feelings of happiness and harmony as all are focused on what is best for students.

The third phase of the appreciative inquiry process asked participants to propose new possibilities based on their enhanced awareness of professional learning successes. The participants responded to the question, "What seed would you like to see planted today?" included:

- "I would like people to begin to wonder about things and have this quest for forming questions." (Leila)
- "I have three seeds...1) acceptance of possibilities...2) accountability [for] each person working towards doing what needs to be done...3) awareness [that] everybody in it together...how each of us...affects another." (Kealoha)
- "Learning is a process so trying to honor that process..." (Liane)
- "Individual attitude and desire to be better today than you were yesterday." (Leina'ala)
- "I hope that one day we will be able to break out of our chains of tradition, not the tradition of our kupuna [ancestors] but rather how things are done because they've always been done in a certain particular way." (Kāla'e)

Due to time constraints, the study did not conduct the fourth AI step of how ideas for empowering and improving professional learning practices could be actualized. The wide range of participants' responses posed insights with regards to brainstorming of potential next steps. How participants' ideas emerged and led them to advocate and create new possibilities for educator professional learning is a consideration for a future study.

Other Experiences

In addition to the experiences and characteristics shared earlier related to structured programs, personal interest, and external drivers, other kinds of experiences were shared by participants. Following is a synopsis of those other experiences.

In some instances, participants described placing themselves in challenging situations that involved risk. For example, Leila, Matthew, and Kealoha shared how challenge and/or purpose were important aspects of their professional learning experiences. While working towards an advanced degree, Leila stated, "For me that was a really exciting time and I guess it goes back to the choice and the desire to really want to learn" and Matthew said, "It becomes a part of you....I felt valued and effective in the process because you actually have to look at student growth and prove it." Kealoha said she issued a challenge to herself. She shared that she had "to put myself into situations where I could learn more...."

Some of the participants commented on how the successful attainment of rigorous program certifications impacted their self-efficacy and the aspiration for recognition as a creditable resource within their school community. Kenneth shared, "Seeing yourself teaching...analyzing video...being validated that what I was doing was of value...." In Kanani's experience of becoming a certified teacher observer, she shared, it was "extremely intense...rigorous....viewing teachers all over the country." Kanani aimed to "pass the proficiency test" and hoped that accomplishment demonstrated to teachers, her "credibility to have these professional conversations." Barb compared the experience of being a conference attendee with being a conference presenter. She reflected on the shift she underwent, "Participating in conferences is one thing....presenting at conferences is like a whole different level and it helps you think about what you're doing and how you want to relate to other people...."

Participants also identified key individuals who influenced their professional learning. Coby shared how his "master teacher" posed a question about whether he had considered

pursuing a masters and how this thought was planted into his consciousness. Haunani recalled her learning from a "Singapore math guru" over the course of a few years and how she was able to apply his strategies into her instruction. And, Pat spoke about meeting "Uncle Eli", whom he had heard about for years, and the introspective questions Uncle Eli posed to each individual.

Lastly, a few participants identified instances in which they connected their learning to their students. Kāla'e recalled a school visit and said, "Best thing about the opportunity was it wasn't the teachers that were teaching me. It was their students." Makana attended a grading assessment seminar and shared, "I changed my practices because what I learned there was so beneficial to students" and "has brought an environment of learning that my students were receptive to."

Summary of Research Question One Results

During the analysis of participant responses, three broad categories emerged from participants' recollections of peak professional learning. The categories were structured programs, personal interest, and external driver. I challenged nine of the 21 participants to narrow to one peak professional learning and, thus, shared a second instance.

Sixty-three percent of the peak professional learning cited by participants were classified into the "structured programs" category. These opportunities included master/doctorate degree programs, certification, conference attendance, summer institute, mainland training, staff service project, and external consultation. The choice of different professional learning venues allowed participants to select what appeared to be an apt fit for their learning preference and area of study. While structured programs were the most common form of professional learning, as identified by participants, further study of the programs lead to a substantial change in educator practice and impact on student outcomes. This may provide additional insights as to highly effective professional learning elements.

The other two categories had a fewer number of professional learning instances. Six, or 20% of participant responses aligned with “personal interest”, such as a desire to share their professional knowledge by conducting professional development, to continuously grow professionally, or a focus on student learning. The initial stimulus for these participants to pursue professional learning appeared to resonate with their beliefs and values. Five, or 17% of participant responses associated with an “external driver”. In this category, examples included a common school goal and exposure to a new idea that challenged previous mindset. Both the personal interest and external driver categories hinted at educators being stimulated to stretch their capacity and embark on ventures which involved, in some instances, a degree of risk-taking. A deeper understanding of why educators pursued professional learning may yield additional information for consideration in an effort to support professional educators.

Educators’ visions for the potential convergence of transformative professional learning with past positive practices and current strategic directives may be beneficial. How might one incorporate the hearts, minds, and voices of educators to stimulate diverse perspectives to develop and execute action plans that successfully arrive at desired destinations? The fourth stage of the appreciative inquiry process could harness the creative possibilities of an enhanced professional learning structure for educators. The establishment of a professional culture for continuous learning, that fortifies and revitalizes the teaching and learning process, is a worthwhile proposition.

Results of Research Question Two: Highly Effective Professional Learning Practices

How do the perceptions of professional learning experiences of Kamehameha educators compare with research on highly effective professional learning

practices? A review of the literature on effective professional development and/or professional learning practices over the past ten years led to the selection of six characteristics which served as a framework for further examination of the professional learning of Kamehameha educators. During the data analysis phase, I coded each

participant's account with the results documented in a matrix that compared the participant's peak professional to highly effective professional learning practices (see Appendix H – Comparison of Participants Peak PL to Highly Effective PL Practice). I will briefly summarize the six effective professional learning practices along with associated excerpts from Kamehameha educators' peak professional learning.

During the analysis and reporting of the participants' professional learning, relative to the highly effective professional learning practices, each participant's experience intersected multiple effective professional learning practices. Table 7 displays the twenty-one participants' peak professional learning responses organized into six highly effective professional learning practices that will serve as the basis for further discussion.

Table 7

Highly Effective Professional Learning Practices Identified by Study Participants

Professional learning practices	# of Occurrences	% of Cases
Specific content/subject matter	20	66%
Coherence to educator knowledge and beliefs	26	87%
Active learning	23	77%
Sustainability	20	66%
Collegial/collective partnerships	17	56%
Sufficient contact time/duration	13	43%

Specific Content/Subject Matter

The first effective professional learning practice examined was specific content/subject matter. It identified the concepts and skills students should learn, deliberately addressed potential areas that may challenge students, and articulated potential strategies for educators to apply in their current context as well as in the future.

There were 20 instances participants directly stated or implied the subject matter they learned had an impact on their practice and/or student learning.

Though students are taught the Hawaiian language at Kamehameha Schools, teachers speaking Hawaiian is not a requirement. The acknowledgement of her limited ability to accurately speak the language of her students prompted Catherine to improve her Hawaiian language skill. Catherine stated not being able to correctly pronounce “Kamehameha”, urged her to take action by enrolling in a Hawaiian language class.

Liane recalled, while pursuing a master’s degree in middle level education, she was part of a cohort of middle level educators from various schools. The program structure supported the opportunity for deep discussions with other practitioners as they shared a common bond, how to effectively teach and reach young adolescent students. According to Liane, “learning the theory and putting it into practice right away”, while “reflecting, constantly evaluating” was a “really powerful” experience.

A Singapore math consultant introduced Haunani to a new instructional strategy that challenged her previous understanding on how to solve math problems. As she gained the knowledge and skill, she persevered and transferred the learning about the methodology to her instruction with students:

He has these little games...still don't know how to do this stuff...but you just keep on learning....more he has us doing it, I can take those 3rd grade ways...teach it to my 3rd graders. (Haunani)

Leina’ala explained how the technology has undergone a major evolution since she first entered teaching and how, after taking time off to raise her family, she experienced a steep learning curve. She acknowledged, “I didn’t even know how to do a PowerPoint.” With the assistance of those around her, she expressed, “it was exciting to be able to engage in those things and then to have people who were very readily available to assist in that learning process.”

Coherence to Educator Knowledge and Beliefs

The second highly effective professional learning characteristic, coherence to educator knowledge and beliefs, described the extent to which professional development activities aligned with educator's prior knowledge and beliefs and how they were consistent with school, district, and state reforms and policy. There were 26 cases in which the participants' professional learning experience resonated with their personal beliefs and knowledge of the professional learning focus area. Participants' accounts appeared to most frequently identify with this effective professional learning characteristic.

An important aspect of Hoku's peak professional learning was that the leadership seminar was research-based. The rationale for the research-based professional learning content underlined an aim efficiency with priorities and time. According to Hoku:

a lot of people say "oh boo-hoo" to research, I'd rather that than just random thoughts. We all have limited capacity in our brains to take in knowledge. I don't want to waste my storage space. I only want to hear the important things. (Hoku)

Makana changed his grading practice after learning about how this new strategy benefits students. He implemented the new grading system and witnessed how his students evolved after instituting this change. The primary focus on best practices for students appeared to be a major impetus for his decision to move forward with transforming his grading practice:

I went to PD grading assessment and I changed my practices because what I learned there was so beneficial to students that there's no reason why I shouldn't do it. ...that has brought an environment of learning that my students were receptive to because they're no longer chained to practices that are not student centered. (Makana)

Kealoha's approach to her professional learning began with the realization that, as times have changed at Kamehameha Schools from her days as a student, she identified a desire to better position herself to meet the current strategic direction. Proactive in

expanding her knowledge and skill in Hawaiian cultural practices, Kealoha expressed a degree of vulnerability:

I was hired about nine years ago, Kamehameha was a different place...Kula Hawai'i was on the forefront. Though I'm part Hawaiian, I'm not really well connected to the culture. I was a little intimidated. So I challenged myself...where could I learn more. (Kealoha)

Matthew explained the impact of the National Board certification process on his professional practice, "it's there for the rest of your career." Though he achieved certification a number of years ago, he internalized effective instructional strategies that "become a part of you." Based on the examination of "tangible" evidence related to his professional practice and student growth data, Matthew expressed feeling validated and effective.

Active Learning

The third professional learning characteristic, active learning, engaged educators to deepen their knowledge and understanding of new content through authentic application in their setting. The focus targeted on improved student learning and served as a stimulus for educators to involve themselves in opportunities to strengthen their effectiveness as they implemented new strategies. There were 23 instances in which participants described their active participation in the learning experience.

During Haunani's pursuit of a graduate degree, she was a member of a cohort that included other educators from Kamehameha. The connection she possessed with these fellow educators evolved as their relevant discussions and debriefs served to further enrich Haunani's examination of her practice over time:

Five of us getting graduate work done. We represented elementary, middle, high school and administration learning together....talk...reflect how applies to our practice....reading and the research-based stuff that permanently changed the way I thought.... (Haunani)

Barb examined how she synthesized her teaching experiences in the elementary classroom with attendance at “conferences of science” to reproduce lessons appropriate for middle school students. Her goal was to discern key content for students to learn “what is important about the cultures and things” in Hawai‘i that may be applicable to other context, such as, “the cultures and teachers in Africa.” She presented her hypothesis to other educators for further review and analysis.

Melia had previous exposure with culturally-based teaching methodology. Through the structure of the summer course, she deepened her understanding of the instructional strategies and processes through personal experience. Melia shared, “I like taking learning out of class and this class supported that” opportunity to visit project sites and meet with community members were relevant, culture-based practices.

Sustainability

The fourth effective professional learning characteristic, sustainability, described the momentum initially established during professional learning. Participants also described which factors lead to this sustained momentum as educators implemented new innovations. Participants stated, in 20 occurrences, how factors fostering their continued growth, influenced their professional learning.

There were participants who mentioned the assistance Kamehameha provided in the way of funding, encouragement, and guidance afforded opportunities for their continued growth as professional educators. Natalie shared, “I’m currently in my own doctoral program and just the changing the course of where I see my thinking and my shifting is going excellent.” Natalie also expressed that her participation probably would not have happened “without Kamehameha support.”

Barb summarized her professional learning experiences, “Kamehameha has just been so supportive in so many different ways. And actually in all the time I’ve been here, I’ve pretty much done all the things that I could. Whenever things came up I was always able to figure out how to do different things...”

Additionally, as an institution dedicated to the education of Native Hawaiian learners, participants recognized and appreciated Kamehameha efforts to encourage a culture for learning among its staff. Coby expressed how he felt fortunate to be part of a school system which offered so much to students and staff:

When I took three years off being away from the institution and looking at what the school not only offers our students, but for us as employees, it's eye opening to know that I got to take advantage of some of these things. Now am I going to be always chosen, no, but certainly to have a desire... (Coby)

Collegial/Collective Partnerships

The fifth effective professional learning characteristic, collegial/collective partnership, alluded to the acquisition of knowledge and skills with other colleagues in an environment thriving on diversity of thought, critical review of practice and support for innovation. In 17 instances, a professional connection appeared between colleagues based on being from the same school, teaching similar grade level and/or subject area, or sharing a common interest. These integral relationships appeared to be built upon an underlying foundation of respect for individual contributions and willingness to share with others.

Kris recalled, during the development of the new school, a collective focus on creating a high quality learning environment. This vision was upheld by the members of the school community and appeared to be based on an expectation and deep appreciation for all to be active contributors. Kris described:

Everyone was vested in creating a great school, 100% and everybody took it seriously. Everyone had trust and respect. We valued each other and we truly felt valued by the administrator. (Kris)

Kanani explained that, during a summer institute, the conditions promoted "a safe environment to speak up about what teacher leadership means." The inclusive collaborative culture and inspired a sense of freedom to openly share "how we can serve not only our

students but adults.” There were opportunities for “great networking” with other educators. The experience empowered her by bolstering her self-confidence as a learner and teacher.

Liane explained how the opportunity to attend a mainland curricular program training helped her and her colleague, “to see the theory, the foundation, so that we could really implement it effectively in our classrooms.” The personal experience of engaging with the various program components, under the guidance of knowledgeable facilitators, Liane reflected that “I felt that finally things made sense now I understood why and how to do it better.”

Sufficient Contact Time/Duration

The sixth effective professional learning practice selected for this study, sufficient contact time/duration, focused on the length of time devoted to professional learning. If a participant indicated the amount of time he engaged in the professional learning experience (e.g., three years for a graduate degree), the time was noted as a sufficient contact time and duration example. If no time frame was mentioned, a participant’s professional learning was not associated with the sufficient contact time/duration element. Thirteen participants referenced a specific time element during their peak professional learning that ranged from three consecutive seminar days during the summer to six years of immersion in graduate studies.

Pat stated he built upon and expanded his prior knowledge and skills as he worked towards obtaining an advanced graduate degree. He noted, “Graduate school is something you're there for at least two years for the most part, so that kind of continuous building changes not only what we do but also how we do it.”

Kanani cited her participation during a three day-long summer seminar. The topics of study, diversity of people in attendance, and devotion of time appeared to provide fertile ground for her enthusiasm and excitement for the potential possibilities. Kanani recalled, “Teacher, leaders, administrators, probably shakers and movers in the district all

participated throughout Kamehameha for this three-day seminar and it was the most passionate, engaging, professional development I've ever had."

Melia specified her participation in a summer course as a peak professional learning for a number of reasons. She dedicated important processing time for deeper reflection upon topics being studied, while engaging with colleagues from different grade levels. Melia reminisced, "It was good during the summer because I had time to focus, to take time to think."

Summary of Research Question Two Results

This study associated the six effective professional learning characteristics with varying degrees of occurrence to the participants' peak professional learning experiences. The analysis of each participant's peak professional learning experience revealed a connection to two or more effective professional learning characteristics. Coherence to educator knowledge and beliefs was the most common effective professional learning characteristics in 26 of the 30, or 87% of the professional learning accounts. Another effective professional learning characteristic was active learning, and that was present in 23 (77%) instances. Twenty cases (66%) revealed specific content/subject matter and sustainability as effective. Collegial/collective participation was cited in 17 (56%) cases. Thirteen peak professional learning experiences (43%) mentioned sufficient contact time/duration. The frequency in which participants' peak professional learning was associated with the highly effective professional learning characteristics seemed to indicate a viable link.

Results of Research Question Three: A'o Aku, A'o Mai

What professional learning characteristics support a'o, a traditional Hawaiian view of education? The inquiry approach to this research question examined key points that emerged from participants' descriptions of their peak professional learning. The determination of whether a participants' peak professional learning was identified with the dynamic a'o aku (*teaching*) a'o mai (*learning*) was based on the discernment of the two

indicators. During the participants' recollection of their professional learning, there appeared to be:

- (a) a sense of responsibility to acquire heightened levels of knowledge and/or skills that positively contributed to their professional practice, students, school environment, broader educational community and/or
- (b) a dynamic, fluid interaction between participants engaged in the learning situation.

Additionally, I noted if participants' peak experiences displayed either one or both indicators of the dynamic nature of a'o aku, a'o mai (see Appendix J - Participant Peak Professional Learning Link to A'o).

There were 20 instances in which participants indicated their professional learning involved a dynamic cyclical exchange. Participants engaged with at least one other person as a co-learner, mentor, or presenter. The capacity to contribute to the learning community is an a'o concept also identified in some of the peak professional learning experiences, as cited by participants. Furthermore, educators expressed an obligation to share their learning with the school community. For example, Kealoha stated, "Just offering what you can so that was a good learning that we could teach each other and learn from each other and try to move toward Kula Hawai'i."

At times, a dynamic, fluid interaction between participants engaged in the learning situation involved other colleagues as co-learners. Melia and Kris expressed the value of working with other staff members and knowing they are invested in one another. Melia continued, "You put everything on the table and everybody helps you with making it click."

Within the learning community, a situated learning focus helped facilitate a high level of purposeful and relevant interactions. For Liane, Leila, and Haunani, their graduate school cohorts served as sources of inspiration in the quest to deepen their knowledge base and expand thinking related to a focused area of study. Liane stated, "We had discussions

amongst different middle schools. You're learning theory then you put it into practice right away."

Four participants specified the desire to advance their own professional learning through specific knowledge and skill acquisition to apply to their work with students. The professional learning experiences included attending conferences related to specific topic areas, participating in school visits, and integrating technology as an instructional strategy. On occasion, their unfamiliarity with the subject matter challenged the participants, as Coby described, "I get that a-ha moment...where okay I get it now that drives me to help the kids I serve."

There were a few cases in which participants mentioned engagement with an individual who facilitated the professional learning. In these exchanges, the facilitators appeared as highly credible resources that cognitively, emotionally and/or spiritually challenged participants. Pat recalled, "I always wanted to meet Uncle Eli...he's looking right at us, asking you where you come from."

Summary of Research Question Three Results

The analysis of professional learning features that supported a'o, a traditional Hawaiian view of education, revealed two main characteristics. The first characteristic indicated that participants felt a personal responsibility to utilize their professional learning which contributed to work with students, colleagues, school improvement, and/or larger community. Participants expressed gratitude for the professional learning opportunities given and support received. As a result, they felt a duty to "give back" by sharing the knowledge and/or skills acquired with others.

A second characteristic specified the importance of establishing a collegial and collaborative learning environment. Participants cited that dynamic interactions with other learners stimulated their professional learning. They sparked a deeper examination of subject matter and its application to their work. The learning partners appeared to be

invested in a synergetic learning process. The establishment of collegial and collective relationships appeared to be cultivated over various lengths of time.

Summary

A primary interest of this study was the emergence of central themes and common patterns that resonated among the educators during the analysis of their peak professional learning experiences. The findings related to the first research question: what experiences do Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning? Participant responses were organized into three categories: structured programs, personal interest, and external driver. Structured programs related to the majority of participants' peak professional learning, and included participation in workshops, summer institutes, seminars, and graduate degree and certification programs. The next category, personal interests, initially appeared to stimulate participants' desire to broaden and/or deepen their knowledge base, while often serving as an example to their students or a resource to colleagues. The final category, external drivers, classified instances in which the participants identified an outside influential factor that appeared to trigger further inquiry. In the experiences reiterated by participants, they, at times, described challenges encountered while engaged in the professional learning.

The second research question analyzed participants' peak professional learning experiences with six effective professional learning characteristics identified in literature over the past decade. Four elements frequently associated with the participants' peak professional learning accounts include: specific content/subject matter, coherence to educator knowledge and beliefs, active learning, and sustainability. Collegial/collective participation and sufficient contact time/duration were less evident in comparison to the other professional learning characteristics.

The third research question examined the professional learning features that support the dynamic nature of a'o, a traditional Hawaiian view of teaching and learning. The cyclical interaction between members engaged in professional learning appeared to generate a

synergetic momentum which resulted in enhanced levels of knowing and performing as perceived by participants. The collegial support they received helped facilitate their professional learning and a desire to positively contribute to their students, colleagues, and school community.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi.

One can learn from many sources.

ʻŌlelo No'eau 203 (Pukui, 1983, p. 24)

A'o, the traditional Hawaiian view of education, served as an entry point for the inquiry into the professional learning experiences of Kamehameha Schools' educators. As an educational institution, Kamehameha Schools' mission is "to improve the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiian students". In education as a whole, research and practice provide numerous examples of the critical role educators contribute to fostering the growth and development of students. From the combination of a'o, Kamehameha Schools' responsibility, and educators' critical role as a context, three research questions evolved. The primary research question of this study was "What are the experiences that Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning?" Central to this question was how new insights regarding educators' professional learning can assist in promoting educators' continued professional growth to meet student needs.

The second research question was "How do perceptions of professional learning experiences of Kamehameha educators align with research on highly effective professional learning practices?" This exploration examined current research on effective professional learning elements and educators' perceptions of peak professional learning. Results from this comparative analysis aimed to provide additional insights for further research and recommendations to enhance educators' professional learning.

Lastly, the third research question was "What professional learning characteristics support a'o, a traditional Hawaiian view of education?" Given Kamehameha Schools' commitment to a Hawaiian culture-based education, a review of professional learning elements aligned with Hawaiian education philosophy could serve as an avenue to build connections between the schools' strategic direction and culturally relevant practices.

This qualitative research study employed a phenomenological approach to investigate the perceptions of educators' professional learning experiences. Twenty-one educators from the three Kamehameha Schools campuses volunteered to participate in focus groups. The design of the interview questions patterned after the first three stages of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001), which is intended to reveal organizational strengths. The analysis of Kamehameha educator perceptions provided insights towards educators' preference with regards to their professional learning. A discussion of the major findings, limitations, implications for practice, future research, and closing remarks will conclude this chapter.

Valued Professional Learning Experiences

Four main findings emerged from the analysis of Kamehameha educators' perceptions about valued professional learning experiences. The findings to be discussed are centered on

- structured programs, outcomes and aspirations;
- multiple pathways and choice;
- collaborative partnerships; and
- professional learning support.

Structured Programs, Outcomes and Aspirations

In the considering the experiences that Kamehameha educators indicate best support their professional learning, the findings suggest that structured programs that fulfill personal aspirations and result in valued outcomes are key. The structured programs, such as advanced degrees, certifications, summer institutes, and conferences, identified by educators are well known for their programmatic aim to foster professional learning. As participants described their experience with a particular program, they identified outcomes that emerged from their engagement. Examples included the ability to immediately apply

strategies to their classes, share new ideas with colleagues, and receive professional validation.

In addition, the valued outcomes also highlighted participants' professional aspirations. For example, Kealoha spoke of her desire to strengthen her Hawaiian cultural background. Barb and Noelani strived to facilitate professional learning in ways that led to enhanced professional practice for the educators and themselves. Leina'ala and Coby kept a focus on their students as they determined their professional learning needs. These educators were invested in the professional learning experience for the valued outcomes they received and the alignment with their professional aspirations. Based on experiences shared by study participants, if all educators were guided, inspired and situated to actualize their professional aspirations, the potential for dynamic educational breakthroughs exist. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) indicated teaching like a professional involves continuous inquiry and improvement. These findings related to alignment to personal aspirations suggests that during rigorous school improvement efforts, the articulation of how strategic plans align with educators' aspirations for students may contribute strongly to development and facilitation of transformative change initiatives. However, additional research may be needed since transformation was not specifically studied here.

Multiple Pathways and Choice

Another major finding is that there is a diversity of professional learning pathways that are peak experiences and considered authentic. As Webster-Wright's (2009) described, educators attain authentic professional learning through a diverse range of activities in a myriad of combinations and experiences. The scope and opportunity to pursue their professional learning goals in varied creative ways was present in this study. Kāla'e and Jason, for example, had very different stories of peak experiences, but each experience was distinctly profound. Kāla'e reached out to schools in New Zealand that welcomed his discussions about iPads in education. Their students taught Kāla'e about how they used iPads. This demonstration showcased strategies for Kāla'e to implement with his students.

Jason initially disagreed with strong statements in a journal article, prompting him to purchase the article author's book then attend that person's seminar; his attendance caused a major change in Jason's own thinking. Both of these paths were not within structured programs, suggesting that personal choice of professional learning should be supported in school change efforts also. Schools seeking improvement efforts could set a particular topic goal, give educators the freedom to pursue their own learning, then host a sharing event to see what varied learnings come back. The sharing out of professional learning with colleagues who pursued the same topic can be valuable, which is the third major finding from this study discussed next.

Collaborative Efforts

Opportunities to collaborate with others appeared to elevate educators' engagement and enthusiasm as they learned with and from colleagues. Borko (2004) and Wells (2013) supported the notion of having at least one other colleague to collaborate with during new learning, as the potential for discourse that challenges beliefs and values, elevates the chances for innovative practice implementation. The ability to meaningfully connect with others was a key finding from participants' peak experiences that involved collaborative interactions. For example, Liane attended a curricular training program with another colleague and they were able to deepen their understanding of the program components together. In addition, a program facilitator supported their ability and confidence to effectively implement the program components.

Kris and Kanani had two different peak experiences, though both had common underlying elements to their stories. Kris described the creation of a new school involved everyone in the school community to set and uphold the school's vision. The members valued each other and felt valued by their administrator. Kanani shared how she felt safe to openly share her thoughts about supporting students and teachers during a summer institute. She was able to network with other educators, and the entire experience raised her self-confidence as a learner and teacher. These examples illustrate the importance of

establishing conditions in the learning environment that foster the development of desirable intangibles; such as commitment, trust and respect, amongst school members. A potential approach is to embrace a spirit of continuous learning for all and calls for members of the school community to voice individual aspirations, develop greater awareness, and strengthened capacity (Senge et al. 2012; Learning Forward, 2011). Educators bringing their individual expertise and desire to create dynamic, collegial learning communities has the potential to spread of effective instructional practices that improve student outcomes.

Professional Learning Supports

An additional key finding was participants' reports of organizational support for their engagement in various professional learning experiences. Participants attributed the assistance received from Kamehameha to the ability to pursue and sustain engagement in structured professional learning, such as advanced degrees, certification, institutes, workshops. The assistance provided to educators included professional leave time and financial support for tuition, fees, travel expenses. As a doctoral student, Natalie has witnessed changes in her thinking and is optimistic about the direction she is headed. Natalie indicated her participation in a graduate program is largely due to the support she has received from Kamehameha.

The attainment of relevant learning was a professional investment that participants indicated as being worthwhile and expressed appreciation for the varied supports provided to educators. For participants, Kāla'e and Hoku, attending mainland conferences afforded them the opportunity to learn from other educators beyond Hawai'i. They returned eager to share the latest, innovative ideas with colleagues and administrators. In Barb's and Coby's experiences, they took slightly different paths to arrive at a similar place. Barb has been able to pursue a wide range of professional learning experiences during her entire career at Kamehameha. For Coby, it was not until he left the organization that he fully realized how much the schools had to offer both students and employees. Upon his return, he made a conscious decision to take advantage of various learning opportunities. Barb and Coby

recognize and appreciate the professional learning options available for them to pursue. With the achievement of successful learning, participants reported feeling validated as professional educators.

Learning Forward (2011) has endorsed a comprehensive approach to educator learning through the adoption of the Standards for Professional Learning. The core elements of the standards serve to further articulate key components to ensure high levels of educator learning, which ultimately lead to changes in student outcomes. Of particular interest to this study is establishment of a continuous support structure for educators to fully comprehend how to integrate innovative practices and adapt to challenges along the way. The range of possible learning supports (e.g., ongoing work sessions, mentoring, examination of student work), is quite diverse and a process to prioritize, monitor, and coordinate resources should be in place. Adults have different learning needs similar to students. As educators are charged to prepare students for an everchanging world, a multi-tiered support structure designed with the range of educators' knowledge, skills, and dispositions in mind is a professional learning strategy for consideration.

Other Themes

Furthermore, four additional themes emerged during the analysis of participants' peak professional learning. Participants referenced the following aspects to varying degrees and frequency as they explained their peak professional learning experiences and the impact on their professional learning:

- challenge/purpose-driven,
- validation of professional practice,
- influence of an expert/mentor, and a
- focus on students.

Challenge/purpose-driven. As participants described their peak professional learning, trigger points, such as exposure to new ideas and ways of doing things, illuminated and served as a catalyst. Through the pursuit of an advanced degree,

certification, and cultural learning, participants appeared to embrace new experiences. One can infer that the achievement of certifications and/or presenting at conferences verified the participants' high level of expertise appeared to be verified by achieving certification and/or presenting at conferences.

Validation as a professional. One can infer that the achievement of certifications and/or presenting at conferences verified the participants' high level of expertise appeared to be verified by achieving certification and/or presenting at conferences. Educator self-reporting on professional learning is a common means to determine the professional development effectiveness in influencing educators' practice.

Expert/Mentor. These interactions tested educators' beliefs, posed new ideas, and presented opportunities to expand their thinking in meaningful ways. The exposure to someone with a different approach from their familiar approaches caused participants to pause, take notice, and consider new possibilities.

Student focus. Participants stated how their perceptions of important student outcomes influenced their professional learning direction and focus.

Each of these themes has potential for further inquiry as variables in educator professional learning. In their dreams for the future, participants had shared a sense of collective responsibility, dynamic energy, and optimism as the focus was on students' well-being. How might these aspirations of professional educators be employed to create engaging, learning environments?

Summary

The four major findings that emerged from this study on educators' valued professional learning experiences are not particularly surprising in contrast with professional development and professional learning over the past thirty years. What is pertinent are the potential launching points described within each finding. These considerations pose avenues for schools to further strengthen and build upon educators' professional learning. Educators and leaders at the school, district, and state levels have access to the latest research to

improve teaching and learning. As research on professional learning continues to evolve, schools should keep abreast of new developments and carefully determine the applicability to their particular school's context.

Limitations

This section will describe study limitations that possibly influenced data collection, the interpretation of the reported findings, and generalizability. Areas of discussion encompass the methodology selected and researcher's dilemmas. At this time, the study findings are not generalizable to all Kamehameha faculty members. The recruitment and selection of participants relied upon seeking voluntary members from teaching staff on the three Kamehameha Schools' campuses. To assemble a representative sampling of Kamehameha Schools educators would entail gathering demographic data not easily obtainable, and determining participant profiles in advance for recruitment and selection purposes.

During the recruitment process, a colleague employed on one of the Kamehameha Schools' campuses assisted by personally enlisting various faculty members. Without this assistance on this particular campus, it was questionable if the desired number of participants would have been available. A possible limitation is the extent of my colleague's role to seek additional study participants may have inadvertently singled out unwilling educators or those with existing predispositions to professional development or professional learning. A research option might be to proceed with the original number of educators who responded to the initial recruitment communication, and note any variations across the focus groups.

The focus group format was beneficial in discussions as it revealed participants' perceptions of highly effective professional learning experiences. However, the number of participants, and duration, varied from group to group. The focus group size across the three campuses ranged from nine to five members, small groups of two and three, and two individual sessions. The sessions with nine and five members utilized the entire two hours.

The smaller groups and individual sessions lasted approximately an hour. The session with nine members recorded fewer individual participant comments as compared with the other sessions. Even with diverse roles and backgrounds represented, fewer participants might allow for more balanced involvement by all participants.

The review of participants' comments related to the definitions of professional development and professional learning produced a notable range of responses. Some were not familiar with the term *professional learning*, but accustomed to references related to *professional development*. Others discerned that *development* suggested a passive reception of information, while *learning* required more active engagement in order to internalize and actualize the knowledge acquired. The varied conceptual understandings of the terminology *professional learning* and *professional development* possibly confused participants during the initial data gathering phase. Perhaps more attention to clarification of ambiguous terminology is key to the overall study would assist in alleviating possible misunderstandings.

At the start of each focus group session, participants were presented with a list of professional development opportunities specified in Kamehameha policy. While the intention of this initiating activity was a starting point for participants to build upon, there is a possibility their thinking possibly hindered rather than stimulated. One dilemma faced in the study was how much background information to provide in order to prompt participants' thought processes without overtly influencing spontaneity. Beginning with whatever participants offered as responses is a viable solution. If there was prolonged hesitation and/or limited number of responses, then the facilitator could offer the list of Kamehameha professional learning opportunities as a secondary step rather than an initial step.

An additional limitation was the use of the same individual to fulfill the role of facilitator for the focus group sessions and conduct the analysis. As a researcher attending to potential validity threats in terms of biases and reactivity, Maxwell (2013) stated that it is impossible to eliminate the researcher's theories, beliefs and perceptions. In Chapter One of

this study, a description of my professional learning aimed to articulate valued experiences in my career as an educator. During the focus groups, being attentive to how I might inadvertently influence participants' responses was an utmost concern. While awareness is a primary step to minimize unintended influences on study participants, and draw unsubstantiated inferences from their testimonies, I included verbatim excerpts as evidence of participant perceptions of highly effective professional learning.

Lastly, the appreciative inquiry approach called for participants to describe a peak professional learning experience when they felt the most engaged, most valued, most effective, or extremely passionate. A potentially faulty assumption was participants' perceptions of engagement, value, effectiveness, and/or passion are linked with high quality professional learning. Appreciative inquiry's (AI) notion that deeply held values associated with professional learning would reveal Kamehameha Schools' positive assets, accomplishments, and valued traditions as perceived by their educators. This AI notion provided initial rationale for the description of a peak professional learning experience.

Implications for Practice

A focus of this study was the examination of Kamehameha educators' perceptions of experiences that best support their professional learning. The following implications for practice are drawn from the research results.

- Provide opportunities for educators to share their learning with each other.
- Develop and enhance collaborative efforts amongst all educators.
- Ensure professional learning is firmly established and supports are in place.

The first implication for practice stems from educators engaging in powerful professional learning pursuits with promising results. Educators appeared to be self-directive, driven by personal interest and/or an external driver that served as a catalyst to prompt their learning. They displayed initiative to explore, formulate, and enact a learning plan of action. Through regular, collegial sharing opportunities there is potential to build and strengthen a community of learners amongst educators. A key facet to educators openly

sharing their learning with one another begins with establishing a climate and culture that is supportive, which leads into the next implication.

To mobilize educators to create better processes and solutions is based upon the concept that collaborating with at least one other counterpart raises the probability of innovative practices being implemented. The implication for practice is to instill a sense of collective responsibility as a key element of the schools' culture and procedures that are valued by all within the school community. The evidence of desirable intangibles; such as respect, trust, humility; will help foster and promote a collegial culture. Ideally, their presence will be visible and consistently modeled at all levels of the organization.

The concluding implication for practice is to ensure professional learning processes are firmly established and supports are in place. Everyone may be at different places on the learning spectrum. Adult learning is similar to student learning and should be orchestrated in a sensitive and effective manner. Possible organizational starting points are to review and identify professional development that has been ineffective, support professional learning efforts that have proven results, engage educators in selecting options that are appropriate for their learning need to address student outcomes. In closing, should any one or more of these implications for practice become viable at the school level, there could be a cascading effect to individual classrooms.

Recommendations for Future Study

Topics for further inquiry

The proposed next steps for further inquiry and analysis stem from related topics and research methodology selected for this study. One recommendation is to extend the examination of a'o through a dedicated research study that observes and documents a'o aku a'o mai processes. The analysis of data gathered may inform what structures and conditions support a cyclical flow of teaching and learning through dynamic exchanges that, in turn, facilitate learning for participants. The review of participants' peak professional learning experiences appeared to reveal the dynamic flow of a'o aku a'o mai

(teaching/learning). These instances seemed similar to the highly effective professional learning practice of collegial/collective participation. Further research will need to be conducted to investigate potential a'o connections to educator learning and practices.

Another topic for inquiry related to this study is the duration and amount of contact time devoted to professional learning, including how to structure the time. The amount of time required to absorb new learning seemed to vary from individual to individual. While sufficient contact time/duration appeared to be the highly effective professional learning characteristic least often indicated by participants, the significance of time and how it is used in relationship to professional learning should not be minimized based solely on the results of this study. Given the press for time in all schools, this area would seem to be ripe for further study.

An additional consideration to further investigate is a review of educators' professional development and/or professional learning policies at the school, district, state level. There is substantial interest and research on highly effective professional learning practices. The opportunity to update terminology to develop a common language, build shared understanding regarding effective practices, and raise expectations within the school community is present. Additionally, comparing the results of different policies possibly is instructive.

Research design

The next set of recommendations for further study pertain to research design decisions. The first design recommendation is to rearrange participants' peak professional learning experiences by different demographics, such as elementary or secondary teacher, years in education, years at Kamehameha, content area expertise. The new data generated from resorting participants' demographics may provide further insights related to educators' professional learning perspectives and preferences. By varying the categories and criteria for disaggregating participants' peak professional learning, new possibilities may emerge not initially considered.

An additional recommendation is to conduct a follow-up study that employs case study as the qualitative research approach. Administering individual interviews and posing follow-up questions to participant's responses could reveal additional insights that are challenging for researchers to orchestrate in focus groups. Potential topics to investigate include why participants pursued particular professional learning opportunities, what conditions led to professional learning, and how did professional learning specifically impact educator's practice and student outcomes. Given the broad range of activities and events educators associated with peak professional learning, case studies of individual educator's experiences related to structured programs, personal interest, and external drivers could further efforts to best support educators' continued professional learning.

The four stages of appreciative inquiry guided the data collection phase of this study. Due to time constraints, this study did not conduct the fourth appreciative inquiry stage that seeks to develop educators' ideas to improve professional learning and empower educators. The last study recommendation is to facilitate all four stages of appreciative inquiry with a diverse group of educators, and culminate in the implementation of selected professional learning ideas aimed to enhance professional practice and/or student outcomes.

As a springboard for further inquiry, the following questions are posed based upon this study:

- What motivates educators to pursue professional learning?
- How might educator choice in professional learning affect the degree to which professional practice is influenced?
- What evidence connects educator professional learning to student learner outcomes?

Conclusion

Due to rapid advancements in the world and shifting priorities at the school level, significant changes to what students need to know and can do have been identified. Subsequently, educators also need to keep abreast of current developments and methods to

engage and challenge students in creative ways. If educators are to develop the required capacity to fulfill this important role to the best of their ability, then accommodations and time must be provided.

This study used a phenomenological approach to examine the experiences Kamehameha educators indicated best support their professional learning in order to gain further insights and awareness to lead to enhanced professional practice in schools. In identifying multiple pathways to achieve professional learning, analysis of the participants' stories revealed that there are features of peak experiences of professional learning that led to impacts on the participants' practice, and in some cases, student outcomes. Structured programs, connection to outcomes and aspirations, availability of multiple pathways and choice, the presence of collaborative efforts, and institutional professional learning supports were the most frequently cited of peak experiences.

Collective and collaborative participation was the highly effective professional learning characteristic that appeared to be indicative of experiences that will better support a'o. Because a'o is a cyclical concept, developing experiences that allow for the educator to give back to their students, colleagues and schools is critical. Kamehameha Schools, as a Hawaiian school, may find benefit in further investigating a'o principles and purposeful design and support of future professional learning experiences for its educators. Through constant reflection and revisiting of educator learning, all schools can potentially find ways to better support and promote professional learning that will be profound rather than fade away.

Appendix A – Characteristics of Effective Professional Development/Professional Learning

	(Borko, 2004)	(Ingvarson, et al, 2005)	(Yoon, et al, 2007)	(Penuel, et al 2007)	(Timperley, et al, 2008)	(Beavers, 2009)	(Desimone, 2009)	(Blank & de las Alas, 2010)	(Learning Forward, 2011)	(Darling-Hammond, (2013)	(Wells, 2013)
Element Descriptors	Research Review	Research Review	Meta-Analysis	Study	Research Review	Journal Article	Proposal	Meta-Analysis	PL Standards	Book	Study
1. Focus on Specific Content/Subject Matter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Sufficient Contact Time and Duration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Collective/Collegial Participation	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Multiple Learn. Activities - Active Learning Methods	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
5. Coherence to Educator Knowledge/Beliefs-PD design	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
6. Sustainability (feedback/follow-up/coaching/mentoring)			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Integration of Content Knowledge, Teaching Effectiveness & Student Assessment	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Learning Goals in PL Design (for Students/Educators)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
9. Focus on Valued Student Outcomes	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	
10. Multi-focus Evaluation of Professional inquiry (student and/or educator learn. needs)	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		
11. Alignment with School Improvement Goals, Comprehensive Change Process					✓	✓			✓		✓
12. Knowledgeable Expertise (external or internal facilitator)	✓		✓		✓					✓	✓
13. Context (System/school-wide climate)	✓			✓		✓			✓		✓ (culture of inquiry, reflective practice)
14. Active Leadership to Organize/Promote PL					✓				✓	✓	
15. Supported & Accompanied by Carefully Designed Research/Data			✓						✓	✓	✓
16. *Ample Time for PL built into work day/week									✓	✓	✓
17. Educator Self-Efficacy						✓					✓
18. Rigorous accountability											✓
19. Sharing expertise										✓	

Appendix B – Memo to KS Leaders Seeking Permission to Recruit Campus Educators

6/10/2013

To: VP of Campus Education
KSH, KSK, KSM Po'okula

From: Laurie Seto
UH Education Doctoral Candidate in Professional Professional Practical

Re: Request Permission to Seek Voluntary Faculty and Administrator Participation in
Professional Learning Study – Informational Memo

Proposed Research Study Title - **A'o Aku A'o Mai: Teaching and Learning - A Study of
Educators' Professional Learning**

This study proposes to examine (1) what educators at Kamehameha Schools (KS) cite as effective professional learning experiences and (2) how does their experiences relate with current research on principles of highly effective professional learning that focus on student-learning outcomes.

How could educators best be supported in their own continued acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to facilitate their students' learning? What elements of professional learning do educators identify as being highly effective to enhancing their practice? How does what educators associate as effective professional learning practices align with research?

The primary objectives of the study are to:

- [1] – surface what KS educators identify as highly effective professional learning;
- [2] - align their experiences with what has been cited in research as highly effective principles of professional learning and;
- [3] - possible recommendations that may arise from the findings.

Methods by which the objectives will be met are summarized below:

[1] analysis of recent survey data collected from faculty and staff will be utilizing as a launching point for designing interview questions (permission to utilize KS SPN and Ka Pi'ina survey data has been granted).

[2] interviews will be conducted with KS faculty (via focus groups) and administrators (individual interviews) who volunteer to be participants.

Study participants:

Educators at the Kamehameha Schools, actual number will vary depending on who is willing to participate. Target for faculty focus groups is minimum of three groups 2-5 members, with a diverse range of teaching background (e.g. years in profession, subject area, grade level, gender). For the administrators, the target group would be those who directly support the professional learning of faculty members (e.g. heads of schools, principals, curriculum coordinators, etc.) and will also strive for diversity amongst those who volunteer to participate.

Recruitment Possibilities Once Permission Granted:

- 1) Via Faculty Meeting
- 2) Flyer
- 3) Email

Tentative recruitment distribution date to faculty on the Kamehameha Campus is late August - early September 2013. In October - November 2013, selected faculty will be invited to participate in focus groups of 3-5 members for two hours to gather more specific information about their professional learning experiences.

Interviews of administrators who are willing to share their beliefs about the professional learning of their faculty will be conducted in late December 2013- January 2014.

Appendix C – Recruitment Flyer

The University of Hawai'i @ Mānoa is conducting a study:

A'o Aku A'o Mai: Teaching and Learning - A Study of Educators' Professional Learning

Laurie Seto (EdD in Professional Practice candidate) would like to invite KS faculty members to participate in a research study.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the professional development and learning experiences of Kamehameha Schools' faculty members. I am seeking members of campus faculty to voluntarily

- Participate in a focus group interview for approximately two hours.
- A summary of the session transcript will be available for participant's review.
- Refreshments will be served.

To learn more about the study and/or volunteer,
please contact Laurie Seto via email lseto@hawaii.edu or phone xxx

If interested in Kapālama Campus Session, please save

September 26, 2013 (Thurs.)

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Location TBA

<i>UH IRB Approval Date 7-26-2013</i>

Appendix D – Consent to Participate in Focus Group

University of Hawai'i

Consent to Participate in Focus Group

A'o Aku A'o Mai: Teaching and Learning – A Study of Educators' Professional

Learning My name is Laurie Seto and I am a professional practice doctorate in education student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH), College of Education. Professional practice doctorates in education are advanced degree programs aimed at preparing professionals for leadership roles at all levels of education, as well as in other positions where the main interest is the application of research in education settings. I am particularly interested in educators' professional learning experiences effect on student outcomes. Faculty members serving at a Kamehameha Schools campus who would be willing to share their professional learning experiences are being recruited to volunteer as participants in the study.

Project Description – Activities and Time Commitment: Participants will asked to join in a focus group discussion with six to ten members from their campus. Depending on the response to an online recruitment survey, the number of focus groups may range from three to six total. The topic will be what are the professional learning experiences of faculty members. The group interview will last approximately 90-120 minutes and will be audiotaped. After the session, has been transcribed, participants will have an opportunity to review the document for accuracy. If there is a need for further clarification after our session, I may contact participants individually.

Benefits and Risks: I believe there are no direct benefits to you in participating in the focus group, however, your responses will provide insight into current professional learning practices at the Kamehameha Schools.

I believe there is little or no risk to you in participating in this project. If, however, you are uncomfortable or stressed by answering or providing any responses to the focus group questions, you may skip the question or withdraw from the focus group altogether. In

addition, there will be no current or future program consequence if you should decide to skip a question or withdraw from participating in the focus group altogether.

Confidentiality and Privacy: The following steps will be in place to help guarantee confidentiality:

- Once recruitment is completed, only the researcher will have access to any of the recruitment information, and these records will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.
- During the discussion, participants will be identified only by pseudonyms.
- Once transcription is complete, only the researcher and professional transcription service will have access to the recordings that were made. These recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.
- All electronic files will be kept in a locked cabinet or will be password protected files that only I will have access to.
- For any transcripts that are made, not only names but any other potentially identifying information (e.g., mentions of specific individuals, events, or places) will be either removed or modified.
- To prevent violations of participants' privacy, each focus group member will be asked to respect the privacy of the others by not disclosing any personal information that is shared during our discussion.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this project is voluntary. You can freely choose to participate or to not participate in the focus group/s, and there will be no current or future penalty or loss of benefits for either decision. If you agree to participate, you can stop at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at xxx or lseto@hawaii.edu. You can also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Thanh Truc Nguyen at xxx or nguyen@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the UH Committee on Human Studies at xxx or uhirb@hawaii.edu.

Agreement to Participate in Research Study

I have read and understand the information about participating in the research study entitled *A'o aku A'o Mai: Teaching and Learning – A Study of Educators' Professional Learning* and I agree to participate in this study and may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time, by notifying the researcher.

Your Name (print): _____

Your Signature: _____

Date: _____

Select your preferred means of contact/information: *email phone-call text*

Preferred Contact Information _____

- ☐ Yes, I will participate in the Focus Group discussion (11/20/13 – Hawai'i Campus – 3:10–5:10pm)
- ☐ I will complete the Participant Profile prior to focus group session.
- ☐ I agree to being audio-recorded during the discussions.

A. The content area that I primarily teach is _____ and grade level _____

B. I have been an educator at Kamehameha for _____ years and in education field for _____ years total.

C. My highest level of education: HS Some College AA BA Masters PhD/EdD

D. My gender is _____.

E. The professional development activities I have participated in the past 2-3 years, include _____
(check all that apply).

- _____ 1) In-Service "B" Credit
- _____ 2) National Board Certification
- _____ 3) Partial Tuition Reimbursement
- _____ 4) Professional Advancement Credit (for Salary Schedule A Employees only)
- _____ 5)
- _____ 6) External Presentations by KS Employees
- _____ 7) Summer Study Grants
- _____ 8) Teacher Exchange/Special Assignment Program
- _____ 9) Internship/Job Rotation

- _____ 10) Professional Learning Communities/Collaborations
- _____ 11) Professional organizations/memberships/publications
- _____ 12) Local Conference/Seminar
- _____ 13) Mainland Conference/Seminar
- _____ 14) Summer Study/Summer Curriculum Work
- _____ 15) Campus/School/Dept. Professional Development
- _____ 16) Other: _____
- _____ 17) Other: _____

F. Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how satisfied you are with the professional development opportunities offered by KS.

1 2 3 4 5
(Not Satisfied) (Satisfied) (Very Satisfied)

Appendix E – Participant Handout

Professional Learning Focus Group

Participant Handout

A major focus for this study is to learn about KS educators' professional development and learning experiences.

For the purposes of this study, the terms *professional development* and *professional learning* will have two distinct definitions.

Professional development - *describes the activities in which delivery of some kind of information is intended to influence your practice.*

Professional learning - *instances in which the knowledge and/or skill gained permanently changed the way you think and/or behave regarding your practice.*

Your sharing will be useful for understanding the experiences of KS educators in this area.

YOUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Below is a list of professional learning opportunities listed under KS Policy 420.40 Learning and Development.

- A. Add to the list any other professional development activities that you and/or others participate in at your school.
- B. Place a (+) next to those activities that you feel are valuable to your professional learning.

- _____ 1)
- _____ 2) National Board Certification
- _____ 3) Partial Tuition Reimbursement
- _____ 4) Professional Advancement Credit (for Salary Schedule A Employees only)
- _____ 5)
- _____ 6) External Presentations by KS Employees
- _____ 7) Summer Study Grants
- _____ 8) Teacher Exchange/Special Assignment Program
- _____ 9) Internship/Job Rotation
- _____ 10) _____
- _____ 11) _____
- _____ 12) _____
- _____ 13) _____
- _____ 14) _____
- _____ 15) _____

Appendix F – Discussion Guide for Focus Group Sessions

“A’o Aku, A’o Mai: Teaching and Learning – A Study of Educators’ Professional Learning”

Discussion Guide

1. Please introduce yourself by your first name, what level and content area you teach and what is your preferred way to learn something new that will help you grow professionally.
2. For the purposes of this study, the terms *professional development* and *professional learning* will have two distinct definitions.

Professional development - describes the activities in which delivery of some kind of information in order to influence your practice.

Professional learning - instances in which the knowledge gained permanently changed the way you think and/or behave.

Does calling out this distinction make sense to you? Why or why not?

3. Here is a list of professional learning opportunities listed under KS Policy 420.40 Learning and Development.

1. In-Service "B" Credit
2. National Board Certification
3. Partial Tuition Reimbursement
4. Professional Advancement Credit (for Salary Schedule A Employees only)
5. Sabbatical Leave
6. External Presentations by KS Employees
7. Summer Study Grants
8. Teacher Exchange/Special Assignment Program
9. Internship/Job Rotation

- Add to the list other PD/PL activities that you and/or others at your school participate.
- Put + next to those activities that you feel were valuable to your professional learning.

- 3) What seem to be core values related to professional development and professional learning at KS?
 - a. What are strengths of how professional development is currently conducted?
 - b. Are there possible ways in which professional development might be improved?

- 4) ***BEST EXPERIENCE.** As you reflect upon your professional learning experiences, recall a peak highpoint when you felt the most engaged, most valued, most effective, or extremely passionate about your participation? Take a few minutes to reflect, jot down notes on back side of handout if you find it helpful. Please share your story. What made it a meaningful experience? Who else was involved? Please describe the event in as much detail.(Look for common themes.)

- 5) ***DEVELOPING CONSENSUS.** In listening to each other' stories, what are commonalities that you hear?

"Imagine it is 10 years from now, Kamehameha Schools has created and implemented conditions such that peak professional learning experiences is the norm on all three campuses. Our educational institution is so successful that educators from across the state, U.S., and Pacific region request to visit. Your group has been asked to host visitors for the day. What would the visitors see and experience? With students? Other adults? What would they feel from being on campus?"

On the blank sheet of paper, create a map/drawing to illustrate this vision.

(Vision for the future - What does it look like?)

- 6) What would it take to make this dream a reality?

Ending:

- 7) A final activity that I'd to seek your feedback is via a short survey. It is intended to gather specific feedback on current professional learning you participate in.

- 8) Before we get to it, is there anything you care to add to our discussion?

- 9) Was there anything that I should have asked, but didn't?

Appendix G – Sample of Initial Coding by In Vivo

ID #	Cod e	PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS	IN VIVO CODES
#1	Haunani	<p>... participating in a ¹graduate program with other faculty members from Kamehameha. For example, maybe there was ²4 or 5 of us from school going and getting graduate work done and it was unreal because you're not by yourself you're with others and we represented from elementary, middle and high school and administration. Even though we sat in different areas of the room it just resonated a good hui of us ³learning together and being able to get together as a group and talk about and ⁴reflect and really think about ⁵how this applies to our practice and that, right there, just that ⁶3 years of going back and forth and of course the ⁷reading and the research-based stuff we had to go through but that really permanently ⁸changed the way I thought about my practice.</p> <p>A smaller one is ⁹instead of sending a lot of people up to conferences, our campus is ⁹bringing people in to our campus. So for me as a resource teacher, I am historically a social studies and english teacher so they've been bringing this math guru on Singapore math and his style of doing math and it's been fabulous. He's been ¹¹coming consistently for I think 2 years, separate occasions and he has us with these worksheets doing these problems and he keeps telling us if you do 100 problems it's going to be so easy. And we're like "Ok". ¹²He has these little games, and ¹³I feel like I'm in 2nd grade again but I still don't know how to do this stuff the way Singapore does but you just keep on learning. But the more and more he has us doing it, I can take those 3rd grade ways of doing thing and teach it to my 3rd graders and it's just the ¹⁴point of doing practice so that's been really valuable, ¹⁵otherwise I would not have gone to see Greg Tang for the 6th opportunity that he's come here. I think that's one that is a peak. He just came last week so it's fresh in my mind.</p>	<p>¹ "GRADUATE PROGRAM"</p> <p>² "4 OR 5 OF US FROM SCHOOL"</p> <p>³ "LEARNING TOGETHER"</p> <p>⁴ "REFLECT"</p> <p>⁵ "HOW APPLIES TO PRACTICE"</p> <p>⁶ "3 YEARS"</p> <p>⁷ "RESEARCH-BASED READING"</p> <p>⁸ "CHANGED THE WAY I THOUGHT"</p> <p>⁹ "INSTEAD OF SENDING A LOT OF PEOPLE TO CONFERENCES"</p> <p>¹⁰ "BRINGING PEOPLE IN TO OUR CAMPUS"</p> <p>¹¹ "COMING CONSISTENTLY FOR 2 YEARS"</p> <p>¹² "HE HAS THESE LITTLE GAMES"</p> <p>¹³ "I FEEL LIKE I'M IN 2ND GRADE AGAIN"</p> <p>¹⁴ "POINT OF DOING PRACTICE SO THAT'S BEEN REALLY VALUABLE"</p> <p>¹⁵ "OTHERWISE I WOULD NOT HAVE GONE TO SEE 'X CONSULTANT' FOR THE 6TH OPPORTUNITY"</p>

#2	Leila	<p>¹Going back to school to get a degree for me in library. All of my other degrees were in education, elementary education and masters in curriculum. So library school, the ²ideas were so new, ... I really felt like I was ³learning lots of new information and I had a ⁴different set of colleagues because in library school they weren't all educators because in library school there's tracts. You could be a school librarian, you could be a public librarian, you could be a special librarian work for a bank, for a corporation or something. It's like you're in classes with all these different people and so the ⁵sharing of ideas from people from different occupations, like I said we weren't all educators, but yet ⁶everyone had something to contribute. For me that was a ⁷really exciting time and I guess it goes back to the ⁸choice and the ⁹desire to really want to learn. Because sometimes with our ¹⁰inservices, we don't always have a choice. We go to them and maybe the topic is interesting but you know what, it ¹¹might not be something that I really want to learn about and so to me the opportunity that grad school gives.... I didn't realize how interesting it was going to be until I actually got into the degree and I really ¹²looked forward to the next classes and the ¹³challenge of how you do libraries and how do you then ¹⁴transfer that knowledge to a school librarian and how do you teach skills that way. So for me that was really ¹⁵pivotal for professional learning.</p>	<p>¹"GOING BACK TO SCHOOL" ²"NEW IDEAS" ³"LEARNING LOTS OF NEW INFORMATION" ⁴"DIFFERENT SET OF COLLEAGUES" ⁵"SHARING OF IDEAS" ⁶"EVERYONE HAD SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE" ⁷"REALLY EXCITING TIME" ⁸"CHOICE" ⁹"DESIRE TO REALLY WANT TO LEARN" ¹⁰"INSERVICES DON'T ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE" ¹¹"MIGHT NOT BE SOMETHING THAT I REALLY WANT TO LEARN" ¹²"LOOKED FORWARD" ¹³"CHALLENGE" ¹⁴"TRANSFER THAT KNOWLEDGE" ¹⁵"PIVOTAL"</p>
#3	Stanton	<p>+ ¹sabbatical and graduate study were tied together. In my case, I was able to ²leave Hawaii for a year and embark upon a graduate program and ³get support while I was doing that. And then in my life circumstances back then with no family, I was able to stay for a second year without pay, just a leave and finish the graduate program. That ⁴2 year period early in my life, ⁵changed the course of my life and it wouldn't have followed the same pathway if I hadn't the ⁶opportunity the school gave me here way back when to do that.</p>	<p>¹"SABBATICAL AND GRADUATE STUDY" ²"LEAVE HAWAII" ³"GET SUPPORT" ⁴"2 YEAR PERIOD EARLY IN MY LIFE" ⁵"CHANGED THE COURSE OF MY LIFE" ⁶"OPPORTUNITY THE SCHOOL GAVE ME"</p>

Appendix H – Sample - Second Level Coding

Pattern Coding by Highly Effective PL Practices, Student Focus, & A'o aku A'o Mai

Effective PL practices	Code Letter
Focus on specific content/subject matter	A
Sufficient contact time/duration	B
Collegial/collective participation	C
Active learning	D
Coherence educator knowledge & beliefs	E
Sustainability (foundation/framework)	F
Student focus	G
A'o aku a'o mai (Hawaiian way of teaching and learning)	H

ID# NAME	CODE	PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS
#5 Pat	A	¹ "GRADUATE SCHOOL"
	B	² "AT LEAST 2 YEARS"
	E	³ "CONTINUOUS BUILDING CHANGES WHAT AND HOW"
	E	⁴ "SKILLS THAT WE BUILD"
	B	⁵ "6 YEARS FOR MY DISSERTATION"
	E	⁶ "YOU LIVE WITH IT"
	F	⁷ "YOU CONTINUE TO BUILD"
	A	⁸ "KEAWEWAI"
	H	⁹ "ALWAYS WANTED TO MEET UNCLE ELI"
	B	¹⁰ "THERE FOR A NUMBER OF DAYS"
	D	¹¹ "IT WAS BUILT TOGETHER SO YOU COULDN'T LEAVE"
	D	¹² "BEING STUCK UP THERE, BEING COLD AT NIGHT"
	F	¹³ "EMBEDS IN YOUR MIND MORE INDELIBLY"

<p>#6 Jason</p>	<p>A/D C/D D D E E F B</p>	<p>¹ "DEVELOPED OVER TIME" ² "PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL ARTICLE" ³ "ARGUING WITH AUTHOR" ⁴ "PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY OF ONE" ⁵ "BUY THE BOOK" ⁶ "LOOKING FOR WHY" ⁷ "STILL NEVER SATISFIED" ⁸ "MAINLAND CONFERENCE" ⁹ "HEAR THE GUY" ¹⁰ "GET THE "WHY" ¹¹ "OH NOW THAT MAKES SENSE" ¹² "YOU CHANGE YOUR FORMAT" ¹³ "DEVELOPED OVER A 2 YEAR PERIOD"</p>
<p>#7 Kealoha</p>	<p>C E C/E/H</p>	<p>¹ "CHALLENGED MYSELF TO PUT MYSELF INTO SITUATIONS WHERE I COULD LEARN MORE" ² "JOINED IKE HAWAII COMMITTEE AS THE MOST NON-HAWAIIAN" ³ "OFFER THE OTHER PERSPECTIVE OF THE TEACHER THAT WILL WONDER WHY ARE WE DOING THIS OR HOW DO WE DO THIS SO EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS IT?" ⁴ "JUST OFFERING WHAT YOU CAN SO THAT WAS A GOOD LEARNING THAT WE COULD TEACH EACH OTHER AND LEARN FROM EACH OTHER AND TRY TO MOVES TOWARD KULA HAWAII"</p>

Appendix I – Comparison of Participant’s Peak Professional Learning to Highly Effective Professional Learning Practices

Participant ID#		Specific Content/ Subject Matter	Coherence to Educator Knowledge & Beliefs	Active Learning	Sustainability	Collegial/Collective Participation	Sufficient Contact Time/Duration
1	Graduate School/ Consultant	1	2	2	1	1	2
2	Graduate School	1	1	1	1	1	
3	Sabbatical + Graduate School		1				1
4	Doctoral Program/Staff Service Project		2	1			
5	Doctoral Program/Staff Service Project	1	1	1	2		2
6	Professional Publications	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	Self-Challenge to Grow Hawn. Cult. Identity	1		1		1	1
8	Graduate School/Mainland Training	2	2	1	2	2	
9	Conference Participation/Presenter	1	1	1	1	1	
10	Certification/Summer Institute	1	2	1	2	1	1
11	National Board Certification Process	1	1	1	1		
12	National Board Certification Process	1	1	1	1		1
13	Multi-media Student Project	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	Mainland Leadership Seminar	1	1	1	1	1	
15	School Visitations/Mainland Conference	1	2	2		2	
16	Common School Goal	1	1	1	1	1	1
17	Professional Development Provider		1	1	1	1	
18	Summer Course	1	1	1	1	1	1
19	Pursuit of Continuous Learning	1	1	1	1	1	
20	National Board Certification/Local Workshop	2	2	2	2	2	1
21	Hawn. Cultural Commitment	1	1	1			
*TOTAL		20	26	23	20	17	13

*Total instances participants’ peak professional learning experience aligned with the effective PL characteristic. Total exceeds the number of participants to honor their experiences. Nine participants cited two peak PL experiences.

Appendix J – Participant’s Peak Professional Learning Link to A’o (Traditional Hawaiian View of Education)

Participant ID #	Peak Professional Learning	*A’o Aku A’o Mai
1	Graduate School/ Consultant	2
2	Graduate School	1
3	Sabbatical + Graduate School	
4	Doctoral Program/Staff Service Project	
5	Doctoral Program/Staff Service Project	1
6	Professional Publications/Conference Attendance	1
7	Self-Challenge to Grow Hawn. Cult. Identity	1
8	Grad. School/Mainland Training	2
9	Conference Participation/Presenter	1
10	Certification/Summer Institute	1
11	National Board Certification Process	
12	National Board Certification Process	
13	Multi-media Student Project	1
14	Mainland Leadership Seminar	1
15	School Visitations/Mainland Conference	2
16	Common School Goal	1
17	Professional Development Provider	1
18	Summer Course	1
19	Pursuit of Continuous Learning	1
20	National Board Certification/Local Workshop	1
21	Hawn. Cultural Commitment	1
	TOTAL	20

*a sense of responsibility to acquire a heightened level of knowledge and/or skills to positively contribute to his/her professional practice, students, school environment, broader educational community, and/or a dynamic, fluid interaction between participants engaged in the learning situation

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